

T W O
TRAGEDIES

Mary VIZ. *Hawkins*

BRITANNICUS;

A N D

ALEXANDER

The GREAT.

Now First Translated into Blank Verse,
from the *French* of

M. R A C I N E.

By Mr. O Z E L L.

L O N D O N,

Printed: And sold by *Ferd. Burleigh* in *Amen-*
Corner. MDCCXIV.

[Price One Shilling.]

THE A. G. B. S.

BRITANNIA

AND

THE A. G. B. S.

THE A. G. B. S.

THE A. G. B. S.

M. R. A. C. W. E.

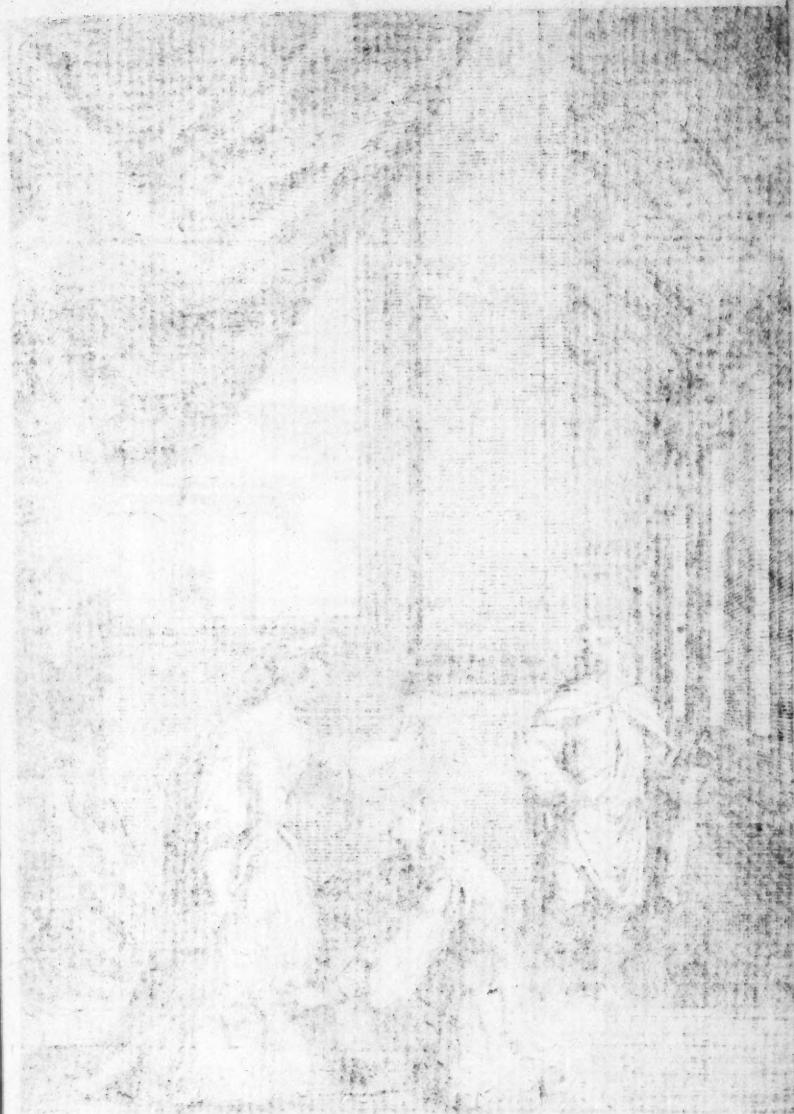
BY M. R. A. C. W. E.

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Lud. Du Guernier inv. et Sculp.

BRITANNICUS.

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TRAGEDY.

Now first Translated from the *K*
French of M. RACINE.



Printed in the YEAR MDCCXIV.

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The English Bookseller's Advertisement.



WE have had of late Years so few new Plays published in *England*, especially Tragedies, that, as Mr. *Marmaduke Myrtle* observes in one of his late **LOVERS**, a Man who frequents the Play-house has got 'em all by Heart: My Purpose therefore is to present the World once a Month with a Couple of translated Tragedies sticht up together. They shall be such as are in greatest Vogue in *France*, where 'tis allow'd they excel in that sort of Poem. The Reception which some of their Tragedies have met with upon our Stage, with little or no Alteration but of Language, is my Encouragement, to get such of 'em put into *English* as are not yet done: And tho' I begin with *Racine*, yet that shall not hinder me from taking in other later Authors, as I see occasion: And accordingly the next Month's Entertainment will consist of two Plays, that between 'em had a run very lately of above One hundred and twenty Nights together, as I am credibly informed by some *English* Gentlemen lately come from *Paris*.

M. RACINE'S Preface.



THIS Tragedy of Britannicus, I may truly say, is what has cost me the most Pains of any I ever writ. Yet I must own, the Success did not presently answer my Expectation. Scarce had it appeared upon the Stage when there rose up against it a Crowd of Criticks, that seem'd as if they would have destroyed it. I my self believed it would in the run of it have worse luck than my other Tragedies. But at length it has happen'd to this Play, as it will always to Works that have any thing good in them: The Criticks are vanish'd; The Play remains. The Publick daily resort to it with more Pleasure than to any of my others. And if I ever writ any thing of true Value, and which deserves any Praise, the best Judges agree 'tis this same Britannicus.

Indeed I work'd upon Models that very much help'd me in the Description I was desirous of making of the Court of Agrippina and Nero. I copy'd my Characters from the greatest Painter of Antiquity; I mean Tacitus. And I was so taken with that excellent Historian, that there is hardly a bright Thought in my Tragedy, but what he gave me the Idea of. I had a design of making an Extract of the most beautiful Passages, which I have endeavour'd to imitate. But I found such an Extract would take up almost as much Room as the whole Tragedy. The Reader therefore will give me leave to refer him to that Author, who is in every body's Hands. And I shall content my self with relating here some one of his Passages upon each of the Characters I have introduced upon the Stage.

To begin with Nero. It is to be observed he is here in the first Years of his Reign, which every body knows were happy. Therefore I was not allow'd to represent him so wicked as he was afterwards. Not that I represent him as a virtuous Man: He was never that. He has not as yet murder'd his Mother, his Wife, his Governors: But he has in him the Seeds of all those Crimes. He begins to have an itching to shake off the Yoke. He hates them all, and conceals his Hatred under false Caresses, *Factus naturâ velare odium fallacibus blanditiis*. In a word, he is here a growing Monster; but dares not yet declare himself, and seeks for Colours for his evil Actions. *Hactenus Nero' flagitiis & sceleribus velamenta quæsit.*

M. RACINE'S Preface.

quæsit. "He could not endure Octavia, a Princess of an-
"exemplary Goodness and Virtue," Fato quodam, an quia
prævalent illicita. Metuebaturque ne in supra foeminarum
illustrium prorumperet.

I give him Narcissus for a Confident. In this I have fol-
lowed Tacitus, who says, that "Nero was very much af-
"flicted at the Death of Narcissus, because that freed Slave
"had a wonderful Conformity with the as yet hidden
"Vices of the Prince," Cujus abditis adhuc Vitiis mirè
congruebat. This Passage proves two things. It proves that
Nero was already vicious, but dissembled his Vices, and that
Narcissus encouraged him in his evil Inclinations.

I have chosen Burrhus, to oppose against that Pest of a
Court. And I have chosen him before Seneca for this Rea-
son: "They were both Governours of Nero's Youth; the one
"for Arms; the other for Letters. And they were both very
"Eminent; Burrhus for his Experience in War, and for the
"Severity of his Manners, Militaribus curis & severitate
"morum; Seneca for his Eloquence; and the agreeable Turn
"of his Wit; Seneca præceptis eloquentiæ & comitate ho-
"nestâ. Burrhus after his Death was very much lamented,
"because of his Virtue; Civitati grande desiderium ejus
"mansit per memoriam virtutis.

All their Difficulty was to stem the Pride and Turbulency of
Agrippina, quæ cunctis malæ dominationis cupidinibus
flagrans, habebat in partibus Pallantem. I say no more of
Agrippina, for there would be too many things to say upon
that Topick. Her I have especially labour'd to express ac-
cording to her true Character, and my Tragedy is no less the
Downfall of Agrippina, than the Death of Britannicus, "whose
"Death was a Thunderbolt to her, and it appeared (says
"Tacitus) by her Consternation, that she was as innocent of it
"as Octavia. Agrippina in him lost her last Hope, and the Perpe-
"tration of that Crime made her fear a greater: Sibi supremum
"auxilium ereptum, & Parricidii exemplum intelligebat.

The Age of Britannicus was so well known, that I could not
possibly represent him otherwise than as a young Prince that had
a great deal of Courage, "very Amorous and open hearted,
"the ordinary Qualities of a young Man. He was fifteen
"Years old, and 'tis said he had a great deal of Wit; perhaps
"he had, or perhaps his Misfortunes made People over weening-

M. RACINE'S Preface.

"ly think so before he was able to give any Marks of it. Neque seque ei fuisse indolem ferunt, sive verum, seu periculis commendatus retinuit famam sine experimento.

It is no wonder he had so bad a Man as Narcissus about him; for Care was long before taken, that there should be set about Britannicus, none but such as had neither Faith nor Honour. Nam ut proximus quisque Britannico neque fas neque fidem pensi haberet, olim provisum erat.

It remains to speak of Junia. We must not confound her with an old Coquet, whose Name was Junia Silana. Mine is another Junia whom Tacitus calls Junia Calvina, of the Family of Augustus, Sister of Silanus, to whom Claudius had promised Octavia. This Junia was young, beautiful, and as Seneca says Festivissima omnium puellarum. " Her Brother and she loved each other tenderly and their Enemies (says Tacitus) accused them of Incest, tho' they were guilty " only of a little Indiscretion. She lived till the Reign of " Vespasian.

I make her enter among the Vestals tho' according to Aulus Gellius, no body was ever received there under six Years old, nor above ten. But here the People take Junia under their Protection: And I considered, that in respect to her Birth, to her Virtue, and to her Misfortunes they might dispense with the Age prescribed by the Laws, as they had before dispensed with the Age of so many great Men for the Consulship, when their Merits had intitled them to that Privilege.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Nero, Emperor, the Son of Agrippina.

Britannicus, Son to the Emperor Claudius.

Burrhus, Governor to Nero.

Narcissus, Governor to Britannicus.

Agrippina, the Widow of Domitius Enobarbus, by whom she had Nero; and, by a second Marriage, Widow of the Emperor Claudius.

Junia, the Mistress of Britannicus.

Albina, Agrippina's Confident.

SCENE lyes at Rome, in an Apartment of Nero's Palace,



BRITANNICUS:

A C T I.

Enter Agrippina and Albina.

ALBINA.



WHAT's this! whilst Nero does to Sleep
indulge,
Must *Agrippina* his Up-rising wait!
Wand'ring i'th' Court, unguarded, un-
attended,
Must *Caesar's* Mother watch the Door
of *Caesar*! [ment.

Madam, I pray turn back to your Apart-

Agr. Not for a Moment will I quit the Place:

No, I will wait his coming forth, *Albina*:

The Pain, the mortifying Pain he gives me.

Will keep Me full-employ'd whilst He reposes.

All my Fore-boardings are but too too sure.

Nero against *Britannicus* declares:

Th' impatient *Nero* throws off his Constraint:

Tir'd with the People's Love, he will be Fear'd!

Britannicus, *Albina*, is his Eye-sore:

And, in my Turn, I too am grown unwelcome.

Alb. You! to whom *Nero* owes the Life he breathes!

Who

Who from the distant rear of Empire call'd him:
 And in dis-herison of *Claudius*' Son
 Bade him be *Caesar*! such high Favours, Madam;
 Must bind him ever to you.

Agr. True, *Albina*:

All this speaks *for* me, if he's grateful-minded,
 But if ungrateful, all this speaks *against* me.

Alb. Ungrateful, Madam! no, his whole Deportment
 Bespeaks a Soul too conscious of its Duty.

For three whole Years what has he said, what done,
 That does not promise *Rome* a perfect Emp'ror?
 For that full Space, *Rome*, govern'd by his Cares,
 Fancies the Consuls times (blest Age) return'd.
 He rules her like a Father. Every Virtue
Augustus had when old, young *Nero* boasts.

Agr. True: He begins there where *Augustus* ended.
 But much I fear, that, devious in his Course,
Nero will end as t' other did begin.

In vain he Counterfeits: the thin Disguise
 Lets in a piercing Eye: His Brow betrays him:
 His Composition's Cruelty and Pride,
 Th' inherent Vices of the Blood he sprung from.
 First Fruits of Tyranny are always Fair.

So *Caius* for a time was *Rome*'s Delight,
 But his feign'd Goodness turning into Fury,
 He that was *Rome*'s Delight became her Horror.
 But after all, what is't to me, if *Nero*
 Should chance to persevere in Virtue's track?

Did I to him commit the Helm of State
 To be conducted as the Senate list'd?

If he affects *The Father of his Country*,
 And hugs himself in gew-gaw Titles, let him:
 But is not *Agrippina* still his Mother?

And yet what Term, what Name are we to give
 Th' Attempt which this Day's rising Sun reveal'd?
 He knows (nor can their Passion be unknown)
 That *Junia* by *Britannicus* is lov'd:

And yet the tender Maid, by this same *Nero*,
 This virtuous *Nero*, is in dead of Night
 Forc'd from her own Apartment: Was it Hatred
 Or Love inspir'd his Mind? or acts he thus

For very Mischief's sake? no, no, his Malice
On Them avenges the Support I give 'em.

Alb. You, Madam, their Support!

Agr. Hold, dear *Albina*:

To Me alone, 'tis true, they owe their Ruin:
By Me *Britannicus* was headlong hurl'd
From his just Hopes of filling *Claudius'* Throne.
When brave *Silanus*, of imperial Race,
Already was affianc'd to *Octavia*,
Already greeted *Claudius'* Son-in-law,
I broke the Match, and marry'd her to *Nero*.
Nero has all, is all: Mine be the Care
To ballance well the Scales 'twixt him and them,
That so, *Britannicus*, in time to come,
May trim the Scales betwixt my Son and me.

Alb. O Policy profound!

Agr. Thus from the Storm

I have one safe establish'd Port to fly to.

Nero would 'scape me, wer't not for this Bridle.

Alb. Why such superfluous Cares against a Son?

Agr. I soon should fear him, ceast he me to fear.

Alb. Perhaps a groundless Terror does alarm ye:

But if the ties of Duty are relax'd,

And he no more performs the Filial Part,

His Change at least escapes the common Sight,

And between you and *Cesar* these are Secrets.

Whate'er new Titles *Rome* deferrs to Him,

Nero takes none but what he gives his Mother.

His lavish Friendship is without Reserve.

Your Name in *Rome* as sacred is as *Nero's*.

Scarce is the sad *Octavia* ever mention'd.

Your Sire *Augustus* honour'd less his *Livia*.

The *Fasces* crown'd with Lawrel, *Nero* first

Permitted to be borne before his Mother.

What greater Testimonies can you wish?

Agr. Less of Respect, and more of Confidence.

These Grants, *Albina*, do but chafe my Sore.

I see my Honours rise, and Credit fall.

No, no, the Time's no more when *Nero*, young,

Dismiss to Me the Suits of prostrate Courriers,

Lodg'd in My Hands the Government's whole weight,

And

And ne'er but when I pleas'd conven'd the Senate;
 My self alone, unseen, behind the Curtain,
 Was that huge Body's animating Soul.
 As yet, unconfident of *Rome's* Good-will,
 My Son's high Station had not turn'd his Head,
 That Day, that fatal Day still strikes my Mind,
 When *Nero*, dazl'd and made drunk with Glory,
 Receiv'd Ambassadors from num'rous Kings
 Offering the Homage of the Universe:
 I went to seat me by him on his Throne:
 (I know not whose curst Counsel wrought my Shame)
 But *Nero's* Visage, at my first Appearance,
 Spoke him Indignant: And my Heart misgave me.
 To varnish with a false Respect th' Affront,
 Th' Ingrate rose up, and running to embrace me,
 Put me beside the Throne, among his Slaves.
 Since this sharp Blow, the Pow'r of *Agrippina*
 Declines each Day, and hastens tow'rd its fall.
 Others enjoy the Substance, she the Shadow.
 Now none's implor'd but *Seneca* and *Burrhus*;
 They are the Pipes thro' whom all Favours pass.

Alb. Alas, if jealous Cares torment your Soul,
 Why feed you thus the Poison that destroys ye?
 Go, and at least Expostulate with *Cesar*.

Ag. *Cesar* forbears to see me but in Publick.
 He gives me Audience in my turn with others.
 His Answer's dictated, nay ev'n his Silence.
 Two Spiés he keeps, His Governors and mine;
 And these in all our Interviews preside;
 Or one or t'other. But in spite of them,
 The more he flies, the keener I'll pursue.
 Last Night's Affair, *Albina*, brings me hither:
 I must advantage take of his Disorder
 E'er he recover——Hark, I hear a treading,
 The Door too opens, now let's hasten in
 And ask of him the Reason of that Rape.
 Could I surprize the Secrets of his Soul!——
 But hah! has *Burrhus* been so early with him?

[*She sees Burrhus come out of the Emperor's Apartments.*]

Enter Burrhus.

Bur. I, in the Emperor's Name, was coming, Madam,
 T' inform

T'inform you of an Order, which at first
Perhaps may startle you, but in it self
Is nothing bat —

Agr. I'll hear it from his Mouth. [*She offers to press in.*

Bur. *Cæsar* for some time is invisib'le. [*He stops her.*

Already, by a Passage known to few,
The Consuls are before-hand with you, Madam.
But I'll return on purpose —

Agr. No, come back.
I'll not disturb his august Privacy.

Mean while, shall you and I once talk sincerely?

Bur. *Burrhus* did never love Hypocrisie.

Agr. How long d'ye mean to hide the Emp'rour from me?
Must I ne'er see him more but as a Medler,

A Busic, Gossiping Impertinent?

Have I then rais'd your Fortune to this height,

To put a Barrier 'twixt my Son and me?

Dare you not leave him to himself a Moment?

Do you and *Seneca* dispute the Glory,

Who first shall blot me out of *Nero's* Thoughts?

Have I giv'n You the Guidance of his Youth,

To render him ungrateful; and to be,

Under his Name, the Masters of the State?

Surely the more I think. the less I fancy

You dare to reckon Me among your Creatures;

You whose high Hopes I might ha' let grown old.

In th'obscure Honours of some Regiment,

And I who scepter'd Ancestry can boast,

Daughter, Wife, Sister, Mother of your Masters.

What is your drift, Sir? think ye that I meant

To give my self three Emperors in one?

Nero's of Age: Is it not time he reign?

When is't you sling away the Rod and Fescue?

Can he seenothing yet but with *your* Eyes?

Has he not Ancestors to form his Conduct?

Let him *Tiberius* copy, or *Augustus*,

Or, if hean, *Germanicus* my Father.

Amidst such Heroes I don't place my self.

But there are Virtues I could sketch out to him.

At least I could instruct him, how much Distance

Is due between a Subject and himself.

Bur. The sole Occasion of my coming forth

Was

Was to excuse an Action of the Emp'r's.
 But since, without permitting me to clear him,
 I'm charg'd with the remainder of his Life,
 I'll answer, Madam, as a rough-hewn Soldier,
 Who wants the Art of Glossing home-spun Truths:

You to my Care committed *Cesar's* Youth,
 I own it, and shall ever bear in Mind.
 But did I swear to you that I'd betray him,
 And make of him an Emperor of Clouts?
 No. I'm not now t'account for him to you.
 He's not your Son; he's Master of the World.
 The *Roman* State requires him at my Hands.
 If he must needs have been bred up in Ign'rance,
 Were there none else but *Seneca* and me?
 Wherefore were Flatterers remov'd from near him?
 Why were * Corrupters fetcht from Banishment?
 The Court of *Claudius* could have furnisht store;
 Thousands had been solicitous t' have spoilt him;
 He, under them, had been a Boy for ever.
 What d'ye complain of, Madam? you're Rever'd.
Rome swears by *Cesar's* Mother, as by *Cesar*.
 'Tis true, he does not daily come to lay
 The Empire at your Feet, and swell your Court:
 But ought he, Madam? can't his Gratitude
 Be made conspicuous but by his Dependance?
 Must *Nero*, always humble, always tim'rous,
 Be never more than nominally *Cesar*?
Rome justifies him. *Rome*, so long † Slave-ridden
 In *Claudius's* Reign, her Freedom dates from *Nero*.
 What said I? Virtue's self seems to revive.
Rome is no more a Prey to one Man's Lust.
 The People name their Magistrates, uncheck't;
Cesar names Captains at the Soldiers choice.
Thraseas i'th' Senate, *Corbulo* i'th' Army
 Are Innocent, in spite of their high Merit.
 The Desarts lately fill'd with exil'd Senators
 Are now inhabited by their Accusers.
 Why shou'd not *Cesar* listen to our Counsels,
 If they tend only to increase his Glory?

But, Madam, *Nero* can conduct himself.

I'm

* He means Ironically himself and *Seneca*, who were fetcht from Exile to tutor *Nero*.

† *Claudius* was entirely rul'd by his Liberti, his Freed-Slaves.

I'm not so vain to say I'm his Director.
 Doubtless to shape his Course aright, he ought
 Upon his Ancestors to fix his Eye,
 And, to do well, be only like himself;
 Happy, if, to each other chain'd, his Virtues
 Do every Year bring back his first Beginnings!

Agr. So being timorous for what's to come,
 You think, without *You*, *Nero* 'll go astray.
 But you, who with your Workmanship content,
 Do take such Pains to spread his Virtues forth,
 Unfold to us the Reasons why this *Nero*,
 Turn'd Ravisher, has forc'd *Silanus*' Sister:
 Was it to brand with Infamy the Blood
 Of my Progenitors, in *Junia*'s Veins?
 What is his Charge against her? What Attempt
 Has made her, in one Day, a guilty Traitors?
 She who 'till now unnurtur'd up in Pride,
 Had ne'er seen *Nero*, but for this late Force,
 Nay, wou'd ha' deem'd it not the smallest Blessing,
 The Happiness of never seeing him.

Bur. I know not that she's charg'd with any Crime:
 Nor, Madam, is she yet condemn'd by *Cesar*.
 Here are no Objects to offend her Eyes.
 She's in a Palace fill'd with her Relations.
 You know, the Rights which are inherent in her,
 May make a Rebel of her Spouse. You know,
 The Blood of *Cesar* ought not to be mixt
 With any but whom *Cesar* shall think fit:
 Your self must own 'tis wrong to give away,
 Without *Him*, a Descendant of *Augustus*.

Agr. Enough, Sir. *Nero* by your Mouth informs me
 That to depend on me, *Britannicus*
 Trusts to a broken Reed. I, to avert
 His Eyes from dwelling on his hapless State,
 Flatter'd his Fondness with the hopes of Marriage:
 But *Nero* will, to my Confusion, shew
 That *Agrippina* can do nought but Promise.
Rome has too great a Notion of my Power,
 So he, by this Affront, will undeceive her,
 And teach with Terror, the affrighted World,
 How to distinguish betwixt him, and me.

He

He may. However, this I dare to tell him,
That he shou'd first be firm in his own Seat,
And that by forcing me to try my Strength
He but exposes his; and in the Scales
My Name may prove more pond'rous than he thinks.

Ber. How, Madam! still suspicious of his Duty?
Nor can't he take a step but you're alarm'd?
Could he imagine, you with *Junia* sided?
Or in *Britannicus's* Cause took part?
Are you become your Adversaries Prop,
To have a Handle to complain of *Nero*?
On the least Tale that's carry'd to and fro,
Will you still threaten to divide the Empire?
Will your Fears never know Cessation, Madam,
And must Expoundings take up all your Visits?
Ah! lay aside a Censor's uncouth Task;
Put on th' Indulgence of an easie Mother.
Suffer some Coldnesses without Impatience,
Nor give the Court a Signal to forsake ye.

Agr. Who, think ye, will be proud of my Protection,
When *Nero* does himself proclaim my Ruin?
When from his Presence *Agrippina's* banisht,
And *Burrhus* dares detain her at his Door?

Bur. Madam, I see 'tis time to hold my Peace,
And that my Freedom grows displeasing to ye.
Your Sorrow is unjust; and every Reason
That sooths it not, does but increase Suspicion.
But to *Britannicus* I yield my Place. [*Seps Brit.*]
I'll leave you, a keen List'ner to his Murmurs:
Perhaps amidst his Complaints you'll hear him, Madam,
Tax those whom *Nero* has the least consulted. [*Exit Bur.*]

Enter Britannicus, and Narcissus.

Agr. Ah! Prince, where run ye? What impatient Warmth
Thus blindly hurries you amidst your Foes?
What seek ye here?

Brit. What do I seek? Ah Heav'ns!
All, all that I in Life held dear, is lost:
Lost here. My *Junia* by a frightful Band
Of Men in Arms was hither drag'd by Night.
Ah! think what Dread must seize her tender Soul
At that new Sight. In short, she's taken from me.

Harsh

Harsh Law, to sep'rate those whom Mis'ry join'd!
They fear'd lest we by mingling our Laments
Shou'd help to bear each other's load of Woe.

Agr. Enough. I feel your Wrongs no less than You.
My Complaints have been before-hand with your Murmurs.
But it shall ne'er be in the Pow'r of Spleen
To disanul the Promise which I made you.
I'll say no more. But if you'd hear me further,
Follow to *Pallas's*; I'll wait you there. [*Ex. Agr. and Alb.*]

Brit. Shall I believe her? May I build upon her,
As Arbiter between her Son and me?
What say'st thou to't, *Narcissus*? Is she not
The very Person, that same *Agrippina*,
Whom my fond Father marry'd to my Ruin,
And who, if I may credit thee, cut short
His Thread of Life, too long for her Designs?

Nar. Mo matter. She like you resents th' Affront.
She vows to give you *Junia* for a Bride.
Unite your Indignations, join your Int'rests.
'Tis to no purpose Here to pour forth Tears.
While you with suppliant Voice and bended Knee,
Scatter Complaints abroad, instead of Terror;
While your Resentment's lost in empty Words,
You may go on and Moan for ever Here.

Brit. Ah! well thou know'st, *Narcissus*, whether I
Have tamely reconcil'd my self to Slavery.
Thou know'st my Fall has not so stunn'd my Senses
As to renounce my Rights of Birth for ever.
But I'm as yet alone. My Father's Friends,
Frozen by my Misfortune, keep in covert.
And ev'n my unripe Age holds at a distance
Many who in their Hearts are loyal to me.
For twelve Moons past, that I by some Experience
Have gain'd a sad Acquaintance with my Lot,
What have I seen around me but bought Friends,
Assiduous Spies of every Step I take,
Who, pickt by *Nero* for this scoundrel Commerce,
Barter with him the Secrets of my Soul?
And thus, *Narcissus*, every Day I'm sold.
He my Designs fore-sees, he hears my Words,
And knows, as well as thou, my very Heart.

Brit.

Bur.

rmth

Harsh

What think'st thou on't, *Narcissus*?

Nar. Ah, curst Baseness,——

But you should grow more wary in your Choice
Of Confidants, my Lord, and not pour forth
Your Secrets, but to those who have Discretion.

Brit. *Narcissus*, thou say'st right. But Diffidence
Is the last thing a generous Spirit learns.

But yet, or I'm deceiv'd, I've found Thee faithful.

My Father bade me trust thee, I remember.

Thou hast with ceaseless watching still preserv'd me
From splitting on a thousand hidden Rocks.

Go then and cast thy prying Eyes abroad,

See if my Friends are stirr'd with this new Rumour.

Examine well their Looks. Observe their Words.

Try if I may depend upon their Aid.

But above all exert thy Cunning Here,

And let me know how *Nero* keeps the Princess:

Whether her beauteous Eyes out-ride the Storm:

And whether I may see her, undebarr'd.

Mean while I bend my Steps to *Nero's* Mother,

To *Pallas's* Apartment. I will see her;

Spirit her up, pursue her, and if possible,

Under her Name go further than she'd have me. [Exit.

A C T II.

Enter Nero, Burrhus, Narcissus, and Guards.

Nero. I N spire of her Extravagances, *Burrhus*,

Still she's my Mother, and I'll pass 'em by.

Not that I'll longer see with patient Eyes

Th' audacious Minister that sooths her Follies.

Pallas with pois'nous Counsels taints her daily;

Debauches too *Britannicus* my Brother;

Him only they consult. Perhaps ev'n now,

Whoever went would find them at his House.

It is too much. I must remove this *Pallas*.

Once then for all, let him depart the City;

Thus I ordain: Nor let the setting Sun

Find him again in *Rome*, or in my Court.

Go, *Burrhus*: Carry this Command from us.

The

The Safety of the Empire so requires.

Ex. Bur.

Draw near, *Narcissus*.

Nar. Now, (the Gods be thank!) *Junia*

Junia secur'd, secures each *Roman* to ye.

Your Enemies, fal'n from their tawring Hope,
Are gone to *Pallas's* to mourn their Weakness.

But hah! my Lord, what's this? you seem disturb'd,
More than *Britannicus* disturb'd, confounded.

What means that Sadness which obscures your Brow,
These gloomy Looks which you throw round at random?
All things on *Cesar* smile: And Fate's his Slave.

Nero. There is no help, *Narcissus*. *Nero* loves.

Nar. *Nero* in love!

Nero. Never before this moment,

But now for Life; I love, I worship *Junia*.

Nar. *Junia*!

Nero. Excited by an Itch of Novelty,
Last Night I view'd her entring in these Places.
Mournful she mov'd, all bath'd in Tears her Eyes,
Which as she rais'd to Heav'n out-shone the Torches;
Her artless Charms were cloath'd with plain Apparel,
Such as of Beauty torn from balmy Rest.

Perhaps the *dishabill*, the Shades, the Torches,
The Shouts, the Silence, and her fierce Invaders,
Had given a tim'rous Sweetness to her Eyes.

Be that as 'twill: With the bright Object charm'd:

I went to speak, but soon my Voice forsook me:

Seiz'd with Amazement, motionless I stood,

And to her own Apartment let her pass.

I went to mine. And there, alone, I strove

To put her Image from me, but in vain.

Too present to my Eyes methought I spoke to her:

I lov'd the very Tears I was the cause of:

Then, but alas too late, I ask'd her Pardon.

Sometimes I Sighs, and sometimes Threats employ'd.

And thus distracted with my new-born Passion,

My Eyes, unclos'd, expected lingring Day.

But I perhaps her Portrait draw too fair,

An overweening Fondness may infuse

Too advantageous Notions of her Person.

Narcissus, what think You?

Nar.

Nar. I am amaz'd

She could so long conceal her self from *Cesar*.

Nero. Whether her Mind suggested *Nero* to her,
As the Foundation of her Brother's Ruin;
Whether her Heart, big with austere Disdain,
Envy'd our Eyes a sight of her Perfections;
Constant to Sorrow, and shut up in Darkness,
She stole her self ev'n from her very Fame.

And 'tis this Virtue, newly seen at Court,
Whose Perseverance irritates my Love.

Whilst throughout *Rome*'s wide bounds there's not a Dame
But counts my Love an Honour, and is proud on't;
Whilst each bright Maid, so soon as she dares trust
Her Looks, essays 'em upon *Cesar*'s Heart:

Alone, the modest *Junia*, in my Palace,
Regards their Honours as an Ignominy,
And peradventure deigns not to inquire
If *Cesar*'s lovely, or knows how to love?

Say, is *Britannicus* in love with *Junia*?

Nar. He, my Lord, love her?

Nero. Is he not too young?

Knows he the Poison of enchanting Eyes?

Nar. My Lord, Love does not always stay for Reason;
Doubtless, he loves her. By such Charms instructed,
His Eyes already are inur'd to Tears.

He veers to every point of her Desires:

Ever Complacent, and perhaps Persuasive.

Nero. How? has he any Empire o'er her Heart?

Nar. I know not. But, my Lord, this I can say,
I've sometimes seen him flinging from the Court,
His Breast with Anger boiling, tho' conceal'd,
Cursing th' Ingratitude of those that shun him,
Repining at your Grandeur and his Slavery,
Floating betwixt his Fear and his Impatience;
Then went to wait on *Junia*, and return'd
Wrapt up in Thought,

Nero. The more he knows to please her
The more unhappy Wretch he'll be: He ought,
Rather ten thousand times, to wish her Hatred.
Nero will not be tamely jealous.

Nar.

Nar. How?

Does my dread Lord disturb himself with that?

Junia might pity him and share his Pain:

She ne'er saw other trickling Tears but his.

But now the scales will fall from off her Eyes,

And viewing with a nearer Look Your Lustre,

She'll see around ye Kings bereft of Crowns,

Unknown among the Crowd, and ev'n her Lover,

Watching your Eyes and proud to get a Glance;

When, from that height of Glory, she shall see

Nero descend, and sighing own her Conquest,

Then, Master of a Heart already charm'd,

Command her but to love ye, and you're lov'd.

Nero. What Store of Troubles and vexatious Cares
I'm laying in.

Nar. What can impede your Course?

Nero. All things. *Octavia*, *Agrippina*, *Burrhus*,
Seneca, *Rome* entire, and three Years Virtue.

Not that the Flame of my connubial Love

Still to *Octavia* burns: No, that's extinct.

With her Sollicitudes long since fatigu'd,

My Eyes are rarely Witness to her Moans.

Happy if an obliging kind Divorcement

Would ease me quickly of the galling Yoke!

Nay, the Gods seem in secret to condemn her:

Four Years her Pray'rs have deafen'd them in vain:

Her Virtue moves them not: No Pledge from Heav'n

Honours the genial Bed: The *Roman* Empire,

With ineffectual Vows, demands an Heir.

Nar. Why then do you demur to put her from ye?

Rome, your own Heart, my Lord, all, all condemns her.

Your Ancestor *Augustus*, sigh'd for *Livia*;

By a Divorce, two-fold, They were united,

And to that blest Divorce You owe the Empire.

Plac'd in *Augustus*' Family by Marriage

Tiberius dar'd to put away his Daughter.

You, you alone, constraining your Desires,

Fear to enjoy your self by Separation.

Nero. And know'st thou not th' impatient *Agrippina*?

Methinks I see her leading in *Octavia*,

Urging, with Eyes inflam'd and stern Regard,

The

The sacred Ties of Wedlock form'd by Her;
Then thund'ring in my Ears a long recital
Of my Ingratitudes. With what a Brow
Shall I sustain this most unwelcome Converse?

Nar. Are you not Master of your self and her?
Must you still tremble under her Tuition?
Reign for your self. Too long you've reign'd for her.
Fear you?—what said I? no, you fear her not.
You just now banisht the audacious *Pallas*,
Pallas, whose only Prop she's known to be.

Nero. I order, threaten, when at Distance from her;
I listen to your Counsels, dare approve 'em,
Stirr my self up against her, and could brave her;
But (I now bare my naked Soul before thee)
Soon as ill Fortune flings her cross my way,
Whether I dare not yet withstand the Pow'r
Of Eyes, in which so long I've read my Duty;
Whether my Mind, of Benefits retentive,
Suggests in secret All I hold of her;
Or what Cause else, my Efforts are too weak,
My Genius trembling bows the Head to hers.
And 'tis to set me free from this Dependance
I shun her ev'ry where and ev'n affront her,
That she might Me avoid as I do Her.
But I too long detain thee. Go, *Narcissus*:
Britannicus perhaps may think thee false.

Nar. No, no, *Britannicus* is wrapt in Me.
He thinks, my Lord, I see you by his Order,
And that I'm here collecting News for Him:
Impatient, above all, to see his Mistress,
He from my Cares expects the grateful Means.

Nero. I yield to't: Carry him the welcome Tidings.
Britannicus shall see her.

Nar. Nay, my Lord.

Nero. I have my Reasons, and thou mayst conceive,
I'll sell him dear the Pleasure of that Sight.
But boast to him thy happy Stratagem.
Tell him you've trickt ev'n Me in his behalf,
And that without my Order 'tis he sees her. [*A Door opens.*
Some Body's moving this way. Hah! 'tis *Junia*.
Go find thy Master out and bring him hither. [*Exit Nar.*
Enter

Enter Junia.

Nero. Madam, you're discompos'd, and change your Colour.
Read you in Nero's Eyes ill-boding Omens?

Jun. My Lord, I can't disguise my Error t'ye.
I meant to see *Octavia*, not the Emperor.

Nero. I know it, Madam, and with Envy heard
Your kind Intentions to that happy Woman.

Jun. You, Sir?

Nero. Is she the only Person, think ye,
That in this Place has Eyes to find your Merit?

Jun. Whom else, my Lord, would ye that I implore?
Of whom inquire a Crime I'm ign'rant of?
You can't but know it, you who punish it.
I beg, my Lord, you'd let me know my Fault.

Nero. How, Madam! is it then so slight a thing
So long to rob us of your lovely Presence?
Those Treasures Heav'n has pleas'd to deck you with,
Were they conferr'd upon you to be bury'd?
Shall the too blest *Britannicus* behold

In stealth his Love increase and your Attractions?
Why, cruel Fair, excluded from that Glory.
Have you exil'd Me to my Court thus long?
Nay more: 'Tis said You, unoffended, suffer
Britannicus t'unfold his Passion t'ye.

Not that I can believe, the rigid *Junia*
Would flatter Him without consulting Me;
Nor that she'd yield to love or be below'd,
And I not made acquainted but by Fame.

Jun. I must, my Lord, confess, his Sighs have daign'd
Sometimes t'unfold the Longings of his Soul:

Britannicus turns not away his Eyes
From an unhappy Maid, the only Remnant
Of an illustrious Ship-wreckt Family.

Perhaps he calls to mind that *Claudius* nam'd me,
In happier times, the Object of his Vows.

He loves me, and therein obeys his Father;
Nor is Your Mother, Sir, offended at it.

Your Aims are so conformable to hers —

Nero. She, Madam, has her Aims, and I have mine:
Let's talk no more of *Claudius*, or my Mother.

'Tis not Their Choice that does determine Me.

B

I

I only am to answer for you, Madam;
My Hand alone shall point ye out a Husband.

Jun. Ah, think, my Lord, that any other Tye
Would shame the *Cæsars*, Authors of my Birth.

Nero. No, Madam, he to whom I mean to give ye
May without Shame unite your Race with his.

You need not blush when you accept his Flame.

Jun. Whom does my Lord intend?

Nero. Madam, my self.

Jun. Your self!

Nero. I would have nam'd another, *Junia*,
Had there been any other above *Nero*.

My Eyes, to find a Choice you might subscribe to,
Have travell'd o'er the Court, *Rome*, and the Empire.

The more I've study'd, Madam, in what Hands
To trust this Treasure of immense Esteem,

The more I find that *Cæsar* only ought

To be the happy Guardian of such Worth,

And that no Hands deserv'dly can retain you

But those which wield the Scepter of the World.

Consult your self. Revolve your early Years.

Claudius, 'tis true, design'd you for his Son,

But that was when he thought to name Him Heir.

Heav'n has pronounc'd; then cross not Heav'n's Appoint-

But take part with the Empire's actual Heir.

[ment,

In vain has Heav'n conferr'd this Gift upon me,

If Your Heart, Madam, is to go elsewhere;

If such Fatigues, which ever wait on Crowns,

Are unrelax'd, unsweetn'd by such Charms;

If whilst to Watchings, to Alarms I give

A Life still lamentable, and still envy'd,

I may not sometimes at Your Feet respire.

Let not *Octavia*, Madam, give ye Umbrage;

You have the Voice of *Rome* as well as mine.

The publick Cry repudiates *Octavia*,

And makes me loose a Knot which Heav'n disowns.

Consider then, and poise within your self

This Offer, worthy of a Prince that loves you;

Worthy of your bright Eyes too long imprison'd,

Worthy of the whole World to whom you owe 'em.

Jun.

Jun. My Lord, I justly am amaz'd, confounded.
Within the Course of one revolving Day

I see my self drag'd hither like a Criminal:
And when with Terror I appear before ye,
(Hardly in my own Innocence confiding)
You offer me, at once, *Octavia's* place.
Yet I may dare to say I've not deserv'd
Or that Indignity or this high Honour.
And can you hope, my Lord, a hapless Maid,
Who early saw her Family extinct,
Who in Retirement feeding her Affliction,
Has gain'd a full Acquaintance with Misfortune,
Should on a sudden pass, from her dark Corner,
Into a Rank, conspicuous to the World,
Whose Glare did ev'n at distance overcome her,
And which in short another fills so well?

Nero. Did I not say I'm putting her away?
Pray have less Terror, or less Modesty.
Forbear to tax my Choice with Indiscretion.
I'll answer for you ; only give Consent.
Recal to mind the Blood from whence you spring;
And don't prefer to *Cesar's* solid Offers,
The Pride of a Refusal you'll repent of. [Thoughts.

Jun. Heav'n knows, my Lord, the bottom of my
I don't indulge my self to empty Glory.
I know to rate the Greatness of your Presents.
But the more Splendor they would shed upon me
The more they would abash me, and expose
The Crime of having strip't the Heirels of 'em.

Nero. You for her Intrests shew a wondrous Care,
And Friendship cannot go a greater Length.
But let's be plain, and drop the Mystery;
The Sister much less moves you than the Brother,
And for *Britannicus* —

Jun. He has, I own,
Found Passage to my Heart: I won't conceal it.
This Frankness, without doubt, is indiscreet;
But my Tongue knows not to bely my Thoughts.
Remote from Court, I thought I need not learn
The Art of talking what I never meant.
I love *Britannicus*: was destin'd for him

When all things seem'd to promise him the Empire.
 But those same Ills which have remov'd him from't,
 His faded Honours, his deserted Palace,
 The flight of Courtiers whom his Fall has banisht,
 Are still the Ties which bind me faster to him.
 All that *You* see, conspires to make ye happy;
 Your Days serene glide on in soft Delights.
 The Empire is your drainless source of Pleasure;
 Or if some Damp does interrupt your Joy
 Straight the whole World is busie to remove it.

Britannicus is single, solitary:

Whatever load of Woe he feels, there's none,
 None, none but I to pity his Misfortune.
 All his Delight consists in Moans, which make him
 A while forget the pressure of his Ills.

Nero. Madam, 'tis that Delight, those Moans I envy,
 Which all but He should pay for with their Life.

But I intend that Prince a gentler Treatment.

Madam, he'll soon be here to wait upon ye.

Jun. My Lord, your Virtues ever were my Anchor.

Nero. I could prohibit him the Entrance here.

But I am willing to prevent the Danger
 Which his Resentment might expose him to.
 I fain would save him. It were better far
 He hear his Sentence from the Mouth he loves.
 If in your Eyes he's dear, remove him from ye;
 But let him have no grounds to think I'm Jealous.
 As from your self let him his Exile take,
 And whether you discourse or silent stand,
 At least by your Indifference let him gather
 He must transfer his Vows and Hopes elsewhere,

Jun. I, Sir? can I pronounce so harsh a Sentence?
 I, who a thousand times have sworn the contrary?
 Nay, tho' I could betray my self so far,
 My Eyes, my Lord, would bid him not obey me.

Nero. I, from my Covert, shall observe you, Madam.
 Lock up your Passion in your inmost Soul.
 You can no Language use but I can construe.
 I shall decypher ev'n your Looks, tho' mute.
 It but a Glance or Sigh escape, to sooth him;
 His Ruin, fixt as Fate, shall pay the Forfeit.

Jun.

Jun. Alas, if I might dare to form a Wish,
Never, my Lord, O never let me see him.

Enter Narcissus.

Nar. My Lord, *Britannicus* inquires for *Junia*.

Nero. Let him approach.

Jun. Alas, my Lord.

Nero. I leave ye.

His Fortune more depends on You than Me.

While you see *him*, remember I see *you*. [*Ex. Nero.*]

Jun. Ah! dear *Narcissus*, run and meet thy Master.
Tell him — I'm lost: Already he appears.

Enter Britannicus.

Brit. O my excessive Joy! does *Junia*'s Presence
Bless poor *Britannicus*, or does he dream?

But ah! I feel a secret Damp, a Worm

That gnaws the Core while all looks fair without.

Must I be forc'd with Shifts and Tricks to steal

A Blessing, which your Eyes indulg'd me daily?

O cursed Night! Did not your Tears, your Presence

Disarm th' audacious Dogs? what did your Lover,

How was He busy'd then? what envious Demon

With-held him from expiring in your Cause?

Amidst such Terrors could ye think of *me*?

My Princess, did you deign to wish me near ye,

Or think how griev'd, how wretched I must be?

You speak not to me! hah! how cold you are!

Is this the Comfort you afford my Sorrow?

Speak. We're alone. Our cheated Enemy

At distance is employ'd, then let's improve

The Moments of his blessed Absence, *Junia*.

Jun. His Power fills the Place you're in, my Lord:

The very Walls may be endu'd with Eyes,

And never is the Emperor absent here.

Brit. How long has *Junia* been so very fearful?

Already does your Love admit Imprisonment?

Where is that Heart which always swore to make

Ev'n *Nero*'s self envy our fond Endearments?

But banish, Madam, an ungrounded Fear.

Faith is not yet in every Breast extinguish'd.

Each outwardly does seem t'approve my Anger:

B 3.

Ev'n

Ev'n *Nero's* Mother has for Us declar'd.
And *Rome* her self's offended with his Conduct.

Jun. Alas! you speak things diff'rent from your Thoughts,
Have you not own'd a thousand times to Me
That *Rome* commended him with one joint Voice?
You ever paid some Homage to his Virtue;
'Tis surely Spite that makes you change your Language.

Brit. Your words surprize me, Madam; much surprize me.
I sought you not for this, to hear you praise him.
With utmost Art I steal a favouring Moment
To let you know the Anguish of my Soul,
And do you, Madam, waste this precious Moment
In praising Him by whom I am oppress'd?
How diff'rent from your self has one Day made ye?
What! have your very Looks learnt Silence too?
What can this mean? you fear to meet my Eyes?
Does *Nero* please you? am I odious t'ye?
By all the Powrs above, I beg, conjure you,
Dispel the Trouble which weighs down my Soul.
Say; is *Britannicus* to be forgot?

Jun. Retire, my Lord, the Emperor is coming.

Brit. After this Blow, *Narcissus*, what Hope's left?

[*Exit Brit.*

Enter Nero.

Nero. Madam.

Jun. My Lord, I cannot hear you: No.
You've been obey'd. At least with-hold me not
From Tears, to which his Eyes will not be witness. [*Exit.*

Nero. Observ'st thou not the Violence of their Love,
Narcissus? it appear'd ev'n in her Silence.

I won't deceive my self: She loves my Rival.

But my Delight shall be to make him mad.

His Pain to Me a charming Image gives;

With Pleasure I beheld him doubt her Truth.

I'll follow her. *Britannicus* waits Thee.

Go, and with fresh Suspicions vex his Mind,

And, (whilst I see how much he's wept, ador'd)

Make him pay dear a Good he's ignorant of.

[*Exit.*

Narcissus alone.

Fortune, *Narcissus* gives a second Call,
And wouldst thou disobey the Goddess' Voice?

Let's

Let's follow to the end her kind Commands;
And to improve our Fortune or our Joy,
No Scruple make the Wretched to destroy.

[Exit.]

A C T III.

Enter Nero, and Burrhus.

Bur. **P**allas, my Lord, will pay Obedience.

Nero. Well?

How look'd my Mother at her Favourite's Fall?

Bur. No doubt, my Lord, the Blow has struck her deep;
And that she'll soon discharge her Grief in Clamour.
Her Transports have long since broke out in Noise.
Heav'n grant they always end in empty Cries!

Nero. Do'st think her capable of aught beside?

Bur. My Lord, your Mother still is to be dreaded:
Rome, and the Soldier'sy revere her Sires;
Germanicus is present to their Mind.

She knows her Power: You her Spirit know;
And what still swells my Apprehensions more,
You back her Wrath, and arm her 'gainst your self.

Nero. I, *Burrhus*?

Bur. Yes, my Lord; that Love which late——

Nero. I understand you: 'tis not to be cur'd.
In short, I'm doom'd to love.

Bur. You fancy so;

And, with some slight Resistance satisfy'd,
Fear a Distemper, feeble in its Birth;
But if your Heart, tenacious of its Greatness,
Wou'd break off corresponding with its Foe,
And not play Booty 'gainst it self, my Lord:
If you consult the Glory you've acquir'd;
If you recall to Mind *Octavia's* Virtues,
And her chaste Love surmounting your Contempt;
If above all, avoiding *Junia's* Presence,
To some Days Absence you condemn your Eyes;
Believe me, Sir, you'd be your self again.
None love, my Lord, unless they will themselves.

Nero. *Burrhus*, when threatening Danger calls to Arms;
Or when the Senate sits in cool Debate,
I'll hear your Counsel, which was ever Wise.
But, take my Word for't, Love's another Science;
Burrhus, nor wou'd I for the World presume
To make your Gravity descend so low —
Farewel: 'Tis Death to be thus long from *Junia*. [*Exit.*
Burrhus alone.

Nero at length unfolds his Genius, *Burrhus*:
That Fierceness, which thou thought'st to bend, is ready
To break thy feeble Ties, and leap the Mounds
Prescrib'd by thy weak Counsel. What Excesses
May it expose him to! Omniscient Heav'n,
In this wild Sea direct me how to steer!
My Brother *Seneca*, who might have eas'd me,
Remote from *Rome*, is ignorant of this Danger.
But what if *Agrippina's* Tenderness
I cou'd excite — But hold, she comes, thank Fortune.

Enter Agrippina, and Albina.

Agr. Well, *Burrhus*, was I wrong in my Suspensions?
You signalize your self by glorious Lessons.
Pallas is banish'd, he whose only Crime
Was that he rais'd your Master to the Empire.
Too well you know it: but for his Advice,
Who govern'd *Claudius* with resistless Sway,
The Emp'rор never had adopted *Nero*.
A Rival too is quarter'd on *Octavia*,
And *Nero's* Nuptial Vows are disannull'd.
Worthy Employment of a Minister
Chosen to curb the Freaks of heady Youth,
To flatter them himself, and give him Lessons
To slight his Mother, and forget his Wife!

Bur. Madam, your Accusations are too early.
All that as yet is done, admits Excuse.
Pallas's Exile was but necessary:
His Pride long since exacted that Reward,
And *Nero* does but, with Regret, fulfill
What the whole Court in secret wish'd were done.
Nor is the rest, as yet, a cureless Mischief.
The Source from whence *Octavia's* Tears take rise
May be dry'd up. But calm your Passion, Madam;

Mild-

Mildness may move her Spouse and fix his Love,
While Threats and Clamours make him but more Savage.

Ag. I see your Aim. In vain you'd stop my Mouth;
Too long I'm silent, and you grow upon't:
Too long I've fear'd a Creature of my making.
My whole Support's not gone along with *Pallas*;
There's Means enow, thank Heav'n, t'avenge my Ruin.
Claudius's Son begins to have a Sense

Of certain Crimes which I repent me of.
I'll go and shew him to the Army, Sir,
Mourn to the Soldiers Eyes his Youth oppress'd,
And teach 'em, by my self, t'atone their Error.
On one Side shall be seen an Emp'r's Son
Re-challenging the Faith sworn to his House,
Backt by the Daughter of *Germanicus*;
On t'other Side the Son of *Enobarbus*,
Sustain'd by *Seneca* and Tribune *Burrhus*,
Who, both recall'd from Banishment by Me,
Share the supream Command, in my Despight.
Our common Crimes shall to the World be known,
And each dark way I've led him up to Empire.
To make him odious and your self obnoxious,
I'll own for Truth the most injurious Rumours,
I'll confess all, Exiles, Assassinsates,
Poison it self —

Bur. Madam, they won't believe ye:
They will except against the wicked Arts
Of a sour'd Witness that her self accuses:
For me, who first fell in with your Designs,
And caus'd the Soldiery to swear to *Nero*,
I don't repent me of that honest Zeal.
Does not the Son succeed the Father, Madam?
Claudius, adopting *Nero*, broke the Pale
That fenc'd his Son's Prerogative from yours.
Rome might have chose him. Thus without Injustice
The young *Agrippa*, from *Augustus* sprung,
Beheld himself excluded, and his Place
Fill'd by *Tiberius* the adopted Heir.
Thus founded, *Cesar's* Rights unshaken stand:
Not *Agrippina's* self has Pow'r to hurt him.
And if my poor Advice weighs ought, his Kindness

Shall make her soon ev'n want the Will to do it.

I have begun the Work, and will pursue it. [Ex. Bur.

Alb. To what Excess your Passion drives ye, Madam!
Heav'n grant the Emp'rour may know nothing on't!

Agr. O that he were but present to my Eyes!

Alb. Madam, conceal your Anger, I conjure ye.
What! for a Sister or a Brother's Int'rests,
Will ye expose the Quiet of your Days?
Will ye constrain the Emp'rour in his Loves?

Agr. Do'st thou not see how low I'm sunk, *Albina*?
Tis me they mean to saddle with a Rival.
And if I break not this accursed Bond,
My Place is taken up, and I am Nothing.
Octavia, with an empty Title honour'd,
Has been 'till now a useless Tool at Court.
All Favours, Honours dealt by Me alone,
Drew to my Shrine the Vows of Human-kind.
Another has surpriz'd the Heart of *Cesar*:
She'll have the Pow'r of Wife and Mistress too:
The Fruit of so much Toil, the Pomp Imperial,
All will be purchas'd by a Look from Her.
What said I? I'm abandon'd—— Ah *Albina*,
The very Thought shoots Daggers to my Heart.
But see *Britannicus*——

Enter Britannicus, and Narcissus.

Brit. Madam, I find

Our common Foes are not invincible;
Nor are all Hearts unmov'd to our Disasters.
Your Friends and mine, so shy of being seen
Whilst we in vain Regrets mispent the Hours,
Stung with the rank Injustice of the Times,
Have now their Grief un-bosom'd to *Narcissus*.
Nero's not yet an undisturb'd Possessor
Of an ungrateful Rival to my Sister.
If You, still sympathizing with *Octavia*,
Resent her Wrongs, we may chastise the Doer,
The Senate's better half espouse our Int'rest.
Sylla, and *Piso*; *Plantus*——

Agr. Prince, what say you?

Sylla, and *Piso*! *Plantus*! Leading Nobles!

Brit. Madam, I see that this Discourse offends ye,
 And that your Anger, trembling, unresolv'd,
 Already fears obtaining what it wish'd.
 No, you've too well establish'd my Disgrace.
 Be not uneasie at my Friends Endeavours.
 I have none left, and your too prudent Cares
 Have long since forc'd them from me, or seduc'd them.

Agri. My Lord, give less Belief to your Suspicions:
 Our Safety on our Harmony depends.
 I've promis'd; and in spite of Opposition
 Will to the outmost Line pursue my Purpose.
 In vain the guilty *Nero* flies my Wrath.
 He shall, or soon or late, his Mother hear.
 Mildness and Force by turns shall be essay'd.
 Or I my self (*Octavia* in my Hand)
 Will go and spread my Fear and her Alarms,
 And move all Hearts to side with her just Tears.
Nero on every side shall be beset.

Farewel. Avoid him if I may advise. [*Ex. Agri. and Alb.*]

Brit. Hast thou not swell'd me with aerial Hopes,
 May I lay any stress upon thy Story,
Narcissus?

Nar. Yes, my Lord, you safely may.
 But let's remove from hence: This Place forbids
 Th' unfolding such deep Mysteries. Why stay ye?

Brit. Why stay !! ah! *Narcissus*!

Nar. Speak more plain.

Brit. If by thy Means I might revisit —

Nar. Whom?

Brit. I blush.

Nar. Believe ye still that she is True?

Brit. No, I believe her Criminal, Ungrateful,
 Deserving of my Anger. But, *Narcissus*,
 'Spite of my self, methinks I don't believe it
 So fully as I ought. Tho' she has err'd,
 I can't help lending Reasons to her Conduct;
 I plead her Cause, Excuse her, Idolize her.
 I fain wou'd overcome my Unbelief:
 I fain wou'd hate her, undisturb'd and calm;
 Who wou'd have thought a Heart, so great in show,
 And from its Infancy enur'd to hate

A faithless Court, shou'd thus degenerate,
Fall from true Glory, and at once contrive
A Perfidy, unheard of ev'n at Court!

Nar. Who knows but in her long-continu'd Solitude
This future Conquest took up all her Thoughts?
Sure that her Eyes wou'd one Day break Concealment,
Perhaps she Hid on purpose to be Sought:
To spur up *Cesar*, by a toilsome Glory,
To overcome a Pride 'till then unconquer'd?

Brit. May I not see her then?

Nar. My Lord, this Instant
She is receiving her new Lover's Vows.

Brit. Well then, let's go *Narcissus*. Hah! she's here.

[Sees Junia.

Nar. Startled.] Ye Gods! 'tis she — the Emp'ror shall
know this.

[Runs off.

Britannicus, Junia.

Jun. Retire, my Lord, and shun the lowring Storm
Which *Junia's* Steadiness has rais'd against ye.
Nero is irritated. — I escap'd
Whilst *Agrippina's* busy'd to detain him.
Farewell: Let no Suspitions wrong my Love:
But wait 'till Time my Innocence shall clear.
Your Image, ever present to my Soul,
Nothing can drive away —

Brit. I take ye, Madam.

You'd have my Flight make room for your Desires,
And leave an open Field to your new Sighs.
Doubtless in seeing Me, a secret Shame
Disturbs your Joy, and makes it incomplete —
Well, we must part —

Jun. My Lord, without imputing —

Brit. You ought at least t'have lengthen'd the Dispute;
That a low groveling unexalted Friendship
Shou'd, over to the side of Fortune, run;
That you are dazl'd with the glare of Empire,
And wish t'enjoy it to my Sister's Loss,
I murmur not. But that this gew-gaw Greatness
Shou'd take up your whole Soul like other Womens,
While to my Eyes you always seem'd to scorn it,
Was the sole Blow my Heart was unprepar'd for.

I've

I've seen Injustice rising on my Ruin,
And Heav'n confederate with my Persecutors;
But yet not All its Wrath was shed upon me;
It still remain'd, that *Junia* shou'd forget me.

Jun. My just Impatience, at a fitter time,
Would make you your Distrust repent: But *Nero*
Now threatens ye. In this most pressing Danger,
My Lord, I've other Cares than to afflict ye.
Go, settle into Reason, cease complaining:
Nero heard all, and order'd me to Feign.

Brit. The cruel? —

Jul. Witness of our Conversation,
With Eye severe he mark'd my every Motion,
Ready to let on You his Vengeance burst,
If but a single Gesture spoke my Love.

Brit. Alas! why wou'd your Eyes abuse me so?
They might have nam'd the Author of that Outrage.
Is Love grown mute? Or has it but one Language?
O from what Pain, what desp'rate Pain one Look
Might have preserv'd *Britannicus*? What need —

Jun. 'Twas needful to be silent, and to save ye.
How oft, alas! (since I must speak) how oft
My Heart prepar'd t'inform ye of its Trouble?
How many Sighs I stopt in their career!
What Pain to shun those Eyes we wish to meet,
Or to stand mute, in seeing him we love!
To hear him groan, and his hard Fate deplore;
When but a Look may ease his lab'ring Soul!
But then, what Tears might such a Look ha' cost!
Alas! when I remember'd That, dismay'd,
I felt my self too shallow a Dissembler.
I fear'd the Paleness of my troubled Visage;
I thought my Looks too full of my Affliction.
My Fancy set before me *Nero* angry,
Upbraiding me with too much Care to please ye.
In short I cou'd ha' wish't I ne'er had lov'd.
Too well, my Lord, the Emp'rour knows our Passion.
Too well, alas! for his Repose and ours.
Once more retire, and hide ye from his Sight.
My Heart will teach ye more, at better leisure.
I have a thousand Secrets to impart —

Brit.

Brit. This is too much. Too much, to let me know
My Happiness, my Crime, your Goodness, Madam :
Does *Junia* know how much she quits for Me!
Thus at your Feet I expiate my Reproach.

Jun. Rise, rise, my Lord: Alas, your Rival's coming.

Enter Nero.

Nero. Continue, Prince, your charming Transports. Ma-
Your Goodness I can gather from *his* Thanks. [dam,
I saw him kneeling at your Feet, for which
He ought to be beholden too, to Me.
This Place is proper, favours much his Passion.
I'll keep you here, that he may Court the better.

Brit. I at her Feet can lay my Grief or Joy,
Where-ever she is pleas'd to let me see her.
Nor does the Aspect of this Place afford
Aught that *my* Eyes shou'd be astonisht at.

Nero. And what does it afford, that does'nt warn ye
That I'm to obey'd, Sir, and respect'd?

Brit. It did not see us both bred up, nor born:
I to obey, and you to lord it o'er me:
Nor was it thought, when first I saw the Light,
That *Nero* e'er shou'd check *Britannicus*.

Nero. Thus Destiny our Wishes has inverted;,
I was a Subject Then, as You are Now.
If you ne'er learn't the Lessons of Submission,
You're young as yet, and may be taught.

Brit. By whom?

Nero. The whole united Empire.

Brit. Does the Empire
Reckon among your Rights, Injustice, Force;
Imprisonments, Divorcements, Rapes—

Nero. The Empire
Pries not into the Secrets I conceal.
Imitate their Respect.

Brit. We know their Thoughts.

Nero. At least they're silent. Imitate their Silence.

Brit. *Nero* begins to lay aside the Mask.

Nero. *Nero* begins to think that you're too bold.

Brit. *Rome* dreamt of nought but Blessings from his Reign.

Nero. Blest, or not blest, no matter, so I'm fear'd.

Brit.

Brit. I ill know *Junia*, or such Sentiments
Will never win Applause from her.

Nero. At least

If I can ne'er attain the Art to please her,

I know the Art to punish a rash Rival.

Brit. For me, whatever Ills Fate has in store,
Nothing can shake my Soul but *Junia's* Hate.

Nero. Wish it. I say no more.

Brit. The Happiness

Of pleasing her is all my Soul aspires to.

Nero. You have her Promise: you will ever please her.

Brit. At least I shall not play the Spy upon her.
I leave her to her own free Thoughts, nor stand
Eyes-dropper-like, to awe her in her Speech.

Nero. I understand ye, Sir. Here, Guards.

Jun. What mean ye?

Consider he's your Brother, and a Rival.

Ills without Number persecute his Life.

Alas! can He, my Lord, excite Your Envy?

Let me, the Ties between your Hearts re-joyning,

Sequester'd from the World, be lost to Both.

My Lord, my flight shall stop your fatal Discords;

I'll fill the number of the Vestal Vot'ries.

No longer let my Vows be cause of Quarrel;

But let the Gods alone be troubled with 'em.

Nero. The Enterprize is strange and sudden, Madam.

Guards, reconduct her to her own Apartment.

And in *Octavia's* keep *Britannicus*.

Brit. Nero knows how to overcome a Rival! [*Scornfully.*]

Jun. Resist not, Prince, the Storm: But let it pass.

Nero. Guards do your Duty instantly: away.

[*Exeunt all but Nero, and enter Burrhus.*]

Bur. Just Heav'n! what see I?

Nero. Not seeing *Bur.*] Thus their Flames are doubled.

I know the Hand that brought about their Meeting.

'Twas not for nothing that my Mother came,

And with extensive Speech prolong'd the time.

Enquire if *Agrippina's* still in Court.

[*To Bur.*]

Burrhus. I'll have her kept in these Apartments:

Remove her Guards, and give her mine. Be quick.

Bur. But, pray my Lord? a Mother? and unheard?

Nero.

Nero. I know not, *Burrhus*, what Designs you're hatching:
But every thing that I desire, of late,
Meets with Reproof from You, if not Obstruction.
I charge you with her, Sir: If you refuse,
Others shall take the Charge of Her and *Burrhus*. [Exe.

A C T IV.

Enter Agrippina, and Burrhus.

Bur. **Y**OU may defend your self, at leisure, *Madam*:
Cesar, unheard, will not condemn his Mother.
If by his Order you're detain'd i'th' Palace,
It is perhaps on purpose to discourse ye.
Be that as 'twill, if I might dare t'advise,
Cease to remember that you are affronted.
Rather prepare with up-lift Hands t'implore him:
Defend Your Self, without accusing Him.
You see, 'tis him alone the Court regards;
All Eyes concenter there; tho' he's your Son,
And ev'n your Creature, he's your Emperor.
You are, like others, subject to that Power
Which he from your Munificence receiv'd.
According as he's cold or friendly to ye,
Your Court around ye dwindles or increases.
In seeking your Support, 'tis his they seek.
But see, the Emperor comes.

Agr. Leave us together. [Exit *Bur.*

Enter Nero.

Agr. Seating her self in a Chair. Come hither *Nero*;
Take your Place by Me.

I am to satisfy you on some Scruples,
I'm ign'rant with what Crime I'm blacken'd t'ye.
I'll tell you all the Crimes I'm guilty of.

You reign. You know what mighty Interval
Your Birth had put between the Throne and You.
Nay ev'n my Ancestors, by *Rome* rever'd,
Had, but for me, been useless Steps to mount by.
When *Messalina*, Mother to *Britannicus*,
Had forfeited her Rights to *Claudius'* Bed,

Among

Among the Beauties, Suitors for his Choice,
 And begging the Concurrence of his Slaves,
 I wish'd to be his Bride; in the sole View
 To leave You in the Throne if I prevail'd.
 I curb'd my Pride. I went and begg'd of *Pallas*.
 His Master, daily fondl'd in my Arms,
 Drank from his * Niece's Eyes, insensibly,
 The Love which I had study'd to impress.
 But then the tie of Blood which join'd us two;
 Kept *Claudius* off from an incestuous Bed.
 He did not dare to wed his Brother's Daughter.
 The Senate is seduc'd. A Law less rigid
 Puts *Claudius* in my Bed, and *Rome* beneath my Feet;
 This done, I introduce you in his House:
 Give ye his Daughter. You're his Son-in-law:
Silanus, who ador'd her, is cast off.
 And with his Blood markt the unhappy Day.
 Nothing, all this. Cou'd ye, in Thought, presume
 That ever *Claudius* wou'd postpone his Son?
 I went to that same *Pallas*, begg'd his Aid.
Claudius, o'ercome by Him, adopted You:
 Calling ye *Nero*, and, before the time,
 Was pleas'd to let you share the Pow'r Supreme.
 'Twas then, the World, recalling what had past,
 Discover'd my Design, too far advanc'd;
 'Twas then, *Britannicus*'s future Fall
 Rais'd Murmurings among his Father's Friends.
 The Eyes of some with Promises I dazl'd,
 Others more turbulent I got exil'd.
Claudius too, tir'd with my eternal dunnring,
 Remov'd, from near his Son, all such whose Zeal
 Again his Way might open to the Throne.
 Then, I my self, chose from among my Followers
 Those I thought proper to conduct the Boy.
 But, by a Choice quite the reverse of that,
 The Governors I nam'd for You were such
 As *Rome* with Voice unanimous esteem'd.
 Deaf to Sollicitings, I trusted Fame.
 I call'd from Exile, from the Army drew
 Both this same *Seneca*, and this same *Burrhus*
 Who since — *Rome* then esteem'd their Virtues highly.

* *Agrippina* was Niece to *Claudius*.

At the same time, exhausting *Claudius*'s Treasure;
 Under Your Name. His Largeſſes I ſcatter'd.
 The Gifts, the Spectacles, (reſiſtleſs Charms)
 Won ye the Hearts of Citizens and Soldiers,
 Who likewiſe, toucht with former Tenderneſs,
 Favour'd in You *Germanicus* my Father.
Claudius, mean while, tow'rd's his Declenſion verg'd.
 His Eyes, long ſhut, at length began to open.
 He found his Error. Siez'd with Apprehenſion,
 He let eſcape ſome Moanings for his Son:
 And wou'd have ſummon'd, but too late, his Friends.
 His Guards, Court, Bed, were all in my Diſpoſe.
 I let him, without Fruit, his Love conſume,
 And reign'd the Miſtreſs of his lateſt Breath.
 My Cares, as if to take from his Affliction,
 Hid from his dying Eyes his Son's Laments.
 He dy'd. A Thouſand Rumours ran of Me.
 I ſtop't the News on't 'till a proper time.
 Whiſt *Burrhus* haſted ſecretly to th' Army
 To take their Oaths; whiſt You beneath my Auspices
 Marcht to the Camp, in *Rome* the Altars ſmoak't
 With Sacrifices; by my cheating Orders
 The People pray'd for a dead Prince's Health.
 At length th' entire Obedience of the Legions
 Having confirm'd your Pow'r beyond all Conteſt
Claudius is ſhewn, the gaping People hear
 At once his Death made known, and your Acceſſion.
 This plain Confeſſion I reſolv'd to make t'ye.
 You've ſeen my Work, and now behold my Wages.
 Who wou'd ha' thought the Hand that reapt the Fruit
 Of ſo much Toil, cou'd in Six Months forget it!
 Nay that ſhort Space appear'd to you too tedious;
 And Gratitude began to give ye Pain.
 Fir'd with Civilities which were conſtrain'd,
 I was o'er-look'd as if you ne'er had known me.
Burrhus and *Seneca* are daily ſeen
 Whetting your Jealouſies, and tracing t'ye
 Leſſons of Infidelity, o'er-joy'd
 To be out-done in their peculiar Science.
Otho, *Senecion*, young Voluptuaries,
 Are now your Conſidents: They praiſe your Taſte,

And

And call your most licentious Starts Divine.
 And when, by your Contempt, resentful grown,
 I askt the Reason of such Injuries,
 You answer'd me by new ones (sole Recourse
 Of an Ingrate, who sees himself confounded.)
 To Day, I promise *Junia* to your Brother;
 Both in my Choice esteem themselves most happy.
 But what do You? *Junia* borne off to Court
 Grows in one Night the Object of your Love.
Octavia, from your Heart expell'd, I see
 Ready to leave the Bed where I had plac'd her.
 Your Brother is arrested: *Pallas* banish'd:
 Nor does my Liberty pass un-attempted:
Burrhus has dar'd to lay his Hands upon me.
 And when, of so much Treachery convicted,
 You ought to study nought but Expiation,
 You order me to justifie My Self.

Nero. I don't forget I owe the Empire t'ye.
 And without all this trouble to repeat it,
 You might have rested, Madam, on my Honour.
 These Jealousies of yours, these constant Murm'ring
 Have long since giv'n the World a shrewd Suspicion,
 That I was but your Tool, and that you workt
 Under my Name, entirely for your self.
 For thus they argue, *Are such Deferences,*
Such Honours. mean Returns for her past Favours?
What Crime then has this Son of hers committed
That she should thus condemn him? did she Crown him
To make a Subject of him? is he but
The Trustee of her Pow'r?

Not but that, Madam, if I could have don't,
 I would have gladly yielded up that Power
 Which your Impatience seems to re-demand:
 But *Rome* will have a Master, not a Mistress.
 You've heard the Clamours which my Weakness rais'd.
 Each Day the People, scandaliz'd to hear
 The Organ of my Voice convey your Will,
 Gave out that *Claudius*, dying, with his Scepter
 Bequeath'd to me his blind Obedience too.
 A hundred times you must have heard the Soldiers
 Reluctant muttering Curses 'twixt their Teeth,

When

When they, to grace some Cavalcade of yours,
 Have marcht before ye with their Eagles, blushing
 With that unworthy Usage to debase
 The Heroes, imag'd by those Birds of *Jove*.
 This would have wrought on any but your self:
 But You, unless you reign, are still complaining.
 United with *Britannicus*, you strengthen
 His Cause with *Junia's* Int'rest: And the Hand
 Of *Pallas* weaves these Plots, and sets 'em forwards.
 And when I'm forc'd on Measures to secure
 My Quiet, you're inflam'd with Wrath and Hatred.
 You will present my Rival to the Army.
 Already has the Noise on't reacht the Camp.

Agr. I make him Emperor! O Ingratitude!
 Did you believe it? what could that produce?
 What Rank, what Honours would his Court afford me?
 What could I hope from such a Thought? Alas,
 If, in Your Government I am not spar'd,
 If my Accusers all my Steps observe,
 If they pursue the Mother of their Emperor,
 What should I do amid an alien Court?
 They would upbraid me, not with idle Clamours;
 Not with Designs stifi'd as soon as born,
 But Crimes committed for you in your Sight,
 And such as would too soon be prov'd upon me.
 I see your serpentizing wily Turnings;
 Nor are my Expectations disappointed.
 Ingratitude was ever in your Nature.
 Ev'n from your Infancy my Cares and Fondness
 Extorted nought from you, but feign'd Returns.
 Nothing could overcome that Savage Fierceness
 Which ought t'have stopt my flow of Favours t'ye.
 Wretch that I am! by what accurst Misfortune
 Must all my Cares serve but to make me mad?
 One Son is all I have. Ye Gods who hear me,
 Have I e'er made a Vow for aught but him?
 Remorse, Fear, Perils, nothing has restrain'd me.
 I vanquish't his Contempt, I turn'd my Eyes
 From Mischiefs which were then denounc'd against me.
 did my All: You reign, and that's enough.
 gether with my Freedom take my Life,

Provided

Provided by my Death the People, rous'd,
Don't tear from You what has cost Me so much!

Nero. Say then, pronounce, what would ye have me do?

Arg. Punish th' audaciousness of my Accusers,
Appease *Britannicus's* ruffled Mind,

Let *Junia* give her Hand to whom she pleases,

Let both be freed, and *Pallas* stay untoucht,

Let me have leave to see you at all Hours,

Nor *Burrhus* dare to stop me at your Door.

[tude

Nero. Well, Madam, henceforth I'm resolv'd my Grati-
Shall in all Hearts ingrave your Power, deep;

And I already bless that happy Coldness

Which now revives the Ardor of our Friendship.

I'll think no more of *Pallas's* Machinations;

But give 'em to the Winds. As for *Britannicus*,

A perfect Reconcilement shall re-tie

The knots of Friendship, and ev'n strain 'em closer.

As to that Love which bred our Separation,

I make You Arbiter 'twixt Him and Me.

Go then, and be the Bearer of this Joy.

Guards, let my Mother's Orders be obey'd.

[Exit Agr.

Enter Burrhus.

Bur. O charming sight! this Peace, and these Embracings
Dilate my Breast with Joy unutterable!

My Lord, you know my Voice was ne'er against her;

You know I never turn'd ye from her Friendship,

And that I not deserve this load of Anger.

Nero. I own, I thought you acted both in concert.

But her Invectives now have set me right,

Her Enmity restores ye to my Favour.

She Triumphs, *Burrhus*, e'er th' has gain'd the Vict'ry,

If I embrace my Rival, 'tis to choak him.

Bur. How my Lord!

Nero. Yes, his Ruin must for ever

Deliver me from *Agrippina's* Rage.

Whilst He is breathing, I but live by halves.

She has fatigu'd me with that hostile Name;

No, her audacious Guilt shall ne'er have Pow'r

To promise him my Place a second Time.

Bur. *Britannicus's* Fall is then resolv'd on?

Nero. E'er Night comes on, I shall forbear to fear him.

Bur.

Bur. And what, my Lord, can prompt ye to this Act?

Nero. My Glory, Love, Security, my Life.

Bur. I don't believe, my Lord, so black a Purpose
Can find admittance to your Bosom.

Nero. *Burhus!*

Bur. O Heavens! can I hear it from Your Mouth?
And can You utter it without a Shivering?
Have ye well thought whose Blood you dip your Hands in?
Is *Nero* tir'd with reigning o'er Men's Hearts?
What will the World say of ye? what's your Aim?

Nero. To his past Glory still a Slave, must *Nero*
For ever have before his Eyes that Love
Which Chance in one Day gives and snatches from us?
Must I indulge their Wills, and cross my own?
Am I their Emp'rour only to please Them?

Bur. What further can ye wish, my Lord, than that
The publick Weal be one of your Donations?
The Blow is yet unstruck, you're yet the Master.
Thus far you're Virtuous, and may still be so.
The way is mark'd, nothing can stop your Course.
You'll rise progressively in Virtue's Scale.
But if your Flatterer's Maxims you pursue,
You must, my Lord, proceed from Crime to Crime,
Back your Severities by cruel Acts,
And swim in Blood when once ye dip into't.
Britannicus's Death will rouse the Zeal
Of Friends still ready to espouse his Cause:
These in their Progress will find new Defenders,
Who will entail the Quarrel on their Heirs.
You raise a Fire that ne'er can be extinguish'd.
Fear'd by Mankind, you all Mankind must fear;
Still punishing, still trembling in your Projects,
Each Subject you must reckon as your Foe.
Ah! does the blest Experience of your Youth
Make ye detest your Innocence, my Lord?
Think on the Happiness that crown'd those Days:
O Heav'n! how calm, how gently did they glide!
What Joy to think, and say within your self,
This moment I am blest. I'm lov'd throughout.
The People are not startled at my Name,
And Heav'n ne'er hears me mention'd in their Groans.

They

They shun me not as 'twere some Savage Beast.

I see where'er I go, Hearts fly to meet me.

Such were your Pleasures. What a Change, ye Gods!

The vilest Blood was precious in your Eyes.

The Senate, I remember well the Day,

Prest ye to sign a guilty Wretch's Sentence,

You thought them too severe, and long resisted;

Then pitying the Misfortunes ty'd to Empire,

I wish, said You, I ne'er had learn'd to write.

O let me turn ye from this Precipice:

My Death will else exempt me from the Sight.

Burrhus shall ne'er be seen t'out live Your Glory.

If you persist in such a black Design,

Behold this Breast, my Lord, this naked Breast,

[He kneels to the Emperor.]

Pierce deep this Heart that can't approve your Purpose.

Where are the Men that have inspir'd ye with it,

Let them on Me essay their trembling Hand.

I see my Tears begin to move my Emp'ror.

I see his Virtue startles at their Fury.

O lose not time, my Lord: Name, name the Wretches

That dar'd to give ye these destructive Counsels.

Send for your Brother, in his Arms forget —

Nero. What say ye, *Burrhus*!

Bur. Yes, he hates ye not;

My Lord, he's wrong'd, I know his Innocence:

I'll answer for him: He is all Obedience.

I fly, to hasten such a gentle Converse.

Nero. Do you and he expect me in my Chamber. *[Exit Bur.]*

Enter Narcissus.

Nar. My Lord, the Poyson's ready! All's prepar'd

For this deserved Death. The fam'd *Locusta*

Officioussly has strain'd her utmost Art.

For proof, she try'd it on a Slave. The Wretch

Expir'd in the instant at my Feet.

The Sword's keen Edge severs the Thread of Life

Less quick than this new Potion.

Nero. 'Tis enough:

I see thy Care, *Narcissus*, and commend it:

But will not have thee move a further step.

Nar. Do ye forbid —

Ner.

Nero. Britannicus and I
Are enter'd into reconciling Measures.

Nar. I would not go about to turn ye from't,
My Lord: But he has lately felt a Prison.
Th' Affront will long sit fresh upon his Mind.
There are no Secrets unexplor'd by Time.
He'll come to hear *Narcissus* was the Hand
Employ'd to give the Poison *Nero* order'd.
(May Heav'n avert it, if he so should purpose)
But He perhaps may do what You durst not.

Nero. His Heart is answer'd for, and I'll quell mine.

Nar. Is *Junia's* Marriage to confirm the Tie?
And do ye Sacrifice to Him your Love?

Nero. You're too inquisitive. Be that as 'twill.
I now no longer count him as my Enemy.

Nar. Then *Agrippina's* Promise will not fail:
She has resum'd her Sovereign Sway o'er *Nero*.

Nero. How's this? what has she said? or what mean You?

Nar. In publick Hearing she has boasted —

Nero. What?

Nar. That if she were to see ye but a Moment,
This mighty Bluster, all this Storm of Anger
Would dwindle and subside in humble Silence;
That You would be the first to sign a Peace,
Happy that she would deign to make up Matters.

Nero. But say *Narcissus*, what wouldst have me do?
I want not Will to punish her Audaciousness:
Nor is't impossible her hasty Triumph
May soon be follow'd with eternal Mourning.
But what will be the Language of the World?
Wouldst thou that *Nero* tread the Paths of Tyrants;
That *Rome*, effacing all my glorious Titles,
Leave me no other Name but that of Pois'ner?
They'll call my Vengeance Parricide, what not?

Nar. Do you, my Lord, make their Caprice your Guide?
Could ye expect they'd always hold their Peace?
Is it for You to mind the Vulgar Talk?
How long will You your own Desires forego,
And be the only Man you dare not trust?
My Lord, you do not know the *Roman* People.
They are not so licentious of their Tongue.

Your

Your Pow'r by so much Caution may be weaken'd.
 They'll think, my Lord, they merit to be fear'd.
 They have long since been fashion'd to the Yoak.
 The Hand that keeps 'em under, they adore.
 You'll ever find 'em crouch to your Commands.
 Their Servile Forwardness fatigu'd *Tiberius*.
 My self, invested with a borrow'd Power,
 Which I receiv'd from *Claudius* with my Freedom,
 A hundred times in my past Glory's Course
 Have try'd their Patience, but could never jade it.
 Do you the Blackness of one Pois'ning fear?
 Dispatch the Brother, cast the Sister from ye,
Rome, were they Innocent, will find 'em guilty,
 And send her Thanks to Heav'n in Clouds of Incense:
 You'll see her mark among th' unhappy Days,
 Those which gave Birth to Brother, and to Sister.

Nero. Once more, I must not, cannot undertake it.
 I promis'd *Burrhus*, nor could I refuse him.
 I will not by a second Breach of Faith
 Furnish his Virtue Arms against my self.
 Whene'er He reasons, feebly I resist,
 Nor can I ever hear him, unconvinc'd.

Nar. Burrhus, my Lord, thinks wide from what he talks.
 His artful Virtue menages his Credit.
 Or rather all of 'em concur in fearing,
 Left by this Blow their Pow'r should be abolish'd;
 Then You, my Lord, were free; and these proud Masters
 Would bend like Us before ye. Know ye not
 What they dare say, *Nero's not born for Empire*:
He neither Says nor Does but as he's taught;
Burrhus conducts his Heart, and Seneca his Head.
He has no other Virtue no Ambition,
No Excellence but Charioteering, Singing,
Reciting Verses on the publick Stage,
But wars by Proxy — Give me Patience, Heav'n.

Nero. Narcissus, follow me. We'll take some course.

[*Exeunt.*]

C

A C T

A C T V.

Enter Britannicus and Junia.

Brit. YES, Madam, Nero in his Chamber waits
 To seal our Friendship by a strict Embrace.
 Thither he calls each gay, each youthful Courtier,
 That to the Banquet's Pomp and social Pleasures,
 May, in their Sight, confirm our Protestations,
 And add fresh Ardor to our new-ty'd Bonds.
 He quits his Love, the Source of so much Hatred,
 And makes You Sovereign Umpire of my Fate.
 As for my Part, tho' of my Rights dispoil'd,
 Tho' with my Honours he adorns his Head,
 Yet since he ceases to oppose my Love,
 And leaves me free Possession of Your Heart,
 I must confess, in Secret I forgive him,
 And yield up all the rest with less Regret:

Shall I no more be sever'd from your Charms!
 And may I, without Danger, now behold
 Those Eyes which neither Threats nor Sighs have mov'd,
 Those Eyes which look't with Scorn on offer'd Empire!

But hah! what new forbidding Fear is this,
 That bridles in your Joy amidst my Raptures?
 Why, whilst I'm speaking, are your troubled Eyes
 Turn'd tow'rds the Heavens with intent Regard?
 What is your Fear?

Jun. I know it not, my self:
 But yet I fear.

Brit. Does *Junia* love me?

Jun. Why that needless Question?

Brit. Nero no more our Happiness disturbs.

Jun. But how are you assur'd that He's Sincere?

Brit. Do ye suspect him of a cover'd Hatred?

Jun. Nero to day lov'd *Junia*, vow'd your Ruin;
 Now Her he shuns, and seeks out You. A Change
 So great as this, is not a Moment's Work.

Brit. This, Madam, is the Work of *Agrippina*.
 She thought my Death would bring along her Ruin.
 Thanks to her jealous Soul, our greatest Foes

Have

Have for our Good employ'd their utmost Cares.
 I trust the Zeal she shew'd. I *Burrhus* trust,
 And ev'n believe his Master to be true.
 I think him like my self, unapt for Treason;
 And that he frankly hates, or not at all.

Fun. Make not a Judgment of your Heart by his.
 You two, my Lord, in Steps quite diff'rent tread.
 I've known the Court and *Nero* but a Day :
 Yet, if I dare to speak my Mind, alas,
 How far is what they Say from what they Think!
 How little do the Mouth and Heart agree!
 With how much Pleasure do they break their Faith!
 A strange Abode for *Funia* and *Britannicus*!

Brit. But be his Friendship either true or feign'd,
 If You fear *Nero*, is He free from Fear?
 No, he will never by a Trait'rous Action
 Pull on his Head the People and the Senate.
 But why should I suspect it? he repents
 His last Injustice; and ev'n to *Narcissus*
 Shew'd his Remorse. Ah Princess, had he told ye——

Fun. But are you sure *Narcissus* don't betray ye?

Brit. Why would ye have me diffident of Him?

Fun. I know not: But, my Lord, your Life's at Stake.
 I every thing susp.ect, fear All are false.

Nero I fear; I fear my own Ill-fortune;
 Spite of my self, my trembling Heart is seiz'd,
 With strange mis-giving Doubts and black Fore-boadings.
 What if this Peace, which you so much relie on,
 Should hide some secret Snares against your Life!
 What if the Emp'ror, at our Love enrag'd,
 Has chose the Night to cover his Revenge!
 What if ev'n now he meditates your Ruin,
 And *Funia* is no more to see *Britannicus*!
 Ah Prince!

[*She weeps.*]

Brit. And does my lovely *Funia* weep!
 Does she descend to Tears, on my Account!
 Amazing Goodness!——*Nero*, fill'd with Splendor,
 Thinks to seduce you with his Grandeur's Witchcraft;
 Yet Here, where I am shunn'd, and He ador'd,
 My Mis'ry you prefer to *Nero's* Pomp!
 Heav'n's 'tis too much! in the same Day and Place

To scorn his Scepter, and to weep for me!

But, Madam, wipe away those precious Drops;
Soon my Return shall dissipate your Fears.
Should I stay longer it would breed Suspicion.
Farewel: I, with a Heart brim-full of Love,
Will go, and in the midst of revelling Youth
See none but *Junia*, think of none but Her.

Jun. Prince——

Brit. I am stay'd for, Madam. and must go.

Jun. At least continue here till you are sent for.

Enter Agrippina.

Agr. Why stay you here, my Lord? *Nero*, impatient,
Regrets your Absence: All the Guests suspend
Their Mirth and Pleasure till You two Embrace.
Then let not a Desire so ardent languish:
But haste away; while We *Octavia* visit.

Brit. Go, charming *Junia*; be thy Mind serene,
And make my Sister happy with thy Presence.

So soon as I'm at liberty, Great Empress, [To *Agr.*
I'll come and pay my Thanks for your high Favours. [Exit.

Agr. Madam, or I'm deceiv'd, or at your Parting
Some Tears eclips'd the Lustre of your Eyes.
May I be told what Trouble form'd that Cloud?
Doubt ye a Peace whose Workmanship I boast?

Jun. After th' uneasie Cares this Day has cost me,
My ruffled Spirits are as yet unsettled.
As yet, alas, I scarce conceive this Miracle.
Ev'n tho' your Goodness all Obstruction conquers,
Inconstancy is common in a Court,
And Love is ever by some Fear attended. [Face,

Agr. Enough: I've spoke: All things have chang'd their
My Foresight leaves no room for your Suspicions.
I'll answer for the Peace which I've seen sworn to.
Nero has giv'n me Pledges too secure.
Ah! had ye seen with what endearing Fondness,
With what Caressings he renew'd his Promise!
His Arms at parting scarce could leave their Hold.
His easie Goodness, o'er his Face diffus'd,
At first reveal'd ev'n his minutest Secrets.
Like a relenting Child, he flew, o'erjoy'd
To own his Faults upon his Mother's Bosom.

But soon resuming a more serious Mein
 (That of an Emp'r^r, who consults his Mother)
 His Confidence did to my Ear commit
 Secrets, on which depend the Fate of Mortals.
 No, I must here confess it to his Glory,
 His Heart no Malice harbours: Our Ill-wishers
 Had against Us abus'd his easie Temper.
 But in its turn their Pow'r at length declines.
 Rome now shall once again know *Agrippina*.
 Already they her very Name adore.
 But let us go, and with *Octavia* end
 A Day as Happy as I thought it Fatal.
 Hah! what's this Noise! what Tumult do I hear?
 What can it be?

Jun. Good Heav'n preserve *Britannicus*!

Enter Burrhus.

Agr. Burrhus, where run ye? Stop. What is the Cause?

Bur. Madam, 'tis done: *Britannicus* expires.

Jun. Ill-fated Prince!

Agr. Expires?

Bur. Or rather's dead.

Jun. Pardon my Transports, Madam: I will go
 And aid *Britannicus*, or die my self. [Exit Jun.]

Agr. O *Burrhus*, what an Enterprize was this!

Bur. Madam, 'tis such as I can ne'er survive:

I'll leave the Emp'r^r, and this fatal Court.

Agr. What! without Horror shed his Brother's Blood!

Bur. With no small Myst'ry this Design was manag'd.

Scarce had the Emp'r^r seen his Brother enter,

He rises, runs and folds him in his Arms;

The Guests are silent: *Caesar* takes a Goblet:

To end the Day auspiciously, says he,

I pour forth the Primitia of this Cup.

Immortal Pow'rs who witness this Effusion,

Propitious, bless our re-united Bonds!

Britannicus prepares to Vow the like:

Narcissus fills the Cup: But scarce his Lips

Had touch'd the Brim, when, (not the Sword produces

Such quick Effects) the Roses leave his Cheeks,

The Light his Eyes, back on his Bed he drops,

Irrevocably gone, and lockt in Death.

Judge with what Consternation all are struck.
 Some fly the Place with frightful Shrieks; But those
 Who had been longer practis'd to a Court
 Compose their Countenance by that of *Cesar*.
 He, on his Bed reclin'd, shew'd no Concern.
This Illness which so very much Alarms ye,
Has oft, says he, attack'd him without danger.
 In vain *Narcissus* makes a shew of Sorrow,
 His Traitious Joy bursts thro' his forc'd Affliction.
 For me, let *Nero* think on't as he pleases,
 I prest my Way thro' his abhorr'd Retinue;
 Confounded at so black a Deed I hasten'd
 To mourn *Britannicus*, the State, and *Cesar*.

Agr. He comes. You'll see it is not I inspire him.

Enter Nero and Narcissus.

Nero. [Seeing *Agr.*] Ye Gods!

Agr. Stay, *Nero*. I shall soon ha' done,
Britannicus is dead, I know the Means,
 I know the Murderer.

Nero. Who, Madam?

Agr. You.

Nero. I!—But these Jealousies are like ye, Madam.
 No Mischief happens but I'm guilty of it.
 And if your wild Discourses gain'd Belief
 'Twas I too cut the Thread of *Claudius*' Life.
 His Son you lov'd: His Death you may regret.
 But can I answer for the Strokes of Fate?

Agr. No, no; *Britannicus* by Poison dy'd:
Narcissus did the Deed which you directed.

Nero. Who can infuse such Thoughts into your Soul?

Nar. How are you hurt, my Lord, by this Suspicion?
 Madam, *Britannicus* had secret Plots
 Which might ha' giv'n ye juster Cause of Grief.
 His Aims were not confin'd to *Junia*'s Bed.
 Ev'n for your Favours he'd ha' punisht ye.
 You were deceiv'd in Him: His ulcer'd Heart
 Had one Day call'd ye to severe Account.
 Whether then Fortune has, unlookt for, serv'd ye,
 Or whether *Cesar*, of the Plots inform'd,
 Which toucht his Life, to me referr'd his Safety;
 Madam, leave Tears to those who are your Foes,

Let such regard this Accident as Fatal,
But you —

Agr. Go on; with such Advisers, *Nero*,
You'll signalize your Reign by brave Exploits;
Go on. This Deed can never be your last.
Your Hand has with a Brother's Blood begun,
And on your Mother's your next Stroke will fall.
You'll be at last fatigu'd with acting Crimes.
Gall'd with the Yoak of Gratitude, thou'lt seek
To free thee from the Mem'ry of my Favours.
But thou shalt reap no Profit from my Death:
Think not I'll leave thee quiet when I dye;
Rome, Heav'n, the Light which thou from Me receiv'dst
Shall set me to thy view each Step, each Moment.
Remorse shall like a Fury haunt thee. Thou
By new Barbarities shalt think to calm her.
Thy Rage still growing wilder in its Course,
Shall mark each Minute of thy Life with Blood.
But Heav'n I hope, tir'd with thy Crimes at length,
Will add thy Ruin to so many Victims,
And force thee, who delightest thus in Blood,
To shed thy own, for want of some kind Hand;
And *Nero's* Name in After-times be thought
The cruelst Brand to the most cruel Tyrants.
This I foretel. Adieu: You may depart.

Nero. *Narcissus* follow me.

[*Ex. Ner. and Nar.*]

Agr. Alas how blindly
To hear *Narcissus* I rejected *Burrhus*!
Observ'd ye the stern Look, vindictive Frown
Nero lancht at me as he left the Place?
'Tis done. Nought now can stop the cruel Wretch:
The Blow which was foretold me now will come,
Nor will You in your Turn escape his Rage.

Bur. Alas, I've liv'd a Day too long already:
Would Heav'n his Hand had, fortunately Cruel,
Essay'd on Me his Fury's first Attempt!
And not have giv'n me thus too sure an Earnest
Of the approaching Miseries of my Country!
The Deed alone is not what grieves my Soul;
(His Jealousie might arm him 'gainst his Brother)

But, Madam, if I may explain my Sorrow.
Nero with Look unchang'd, beheld him dye:
 His Eyes already have attain'd the Firmness
 Of Tyrants harden'd in their Guilt from Childhood.
 But let him make an end, and rid his Court
 Of one who cannot sooth him in his Crimes;
 Far from endeavouring to avoid his Wrath,
 The quickest Death will be to Me the Pleasing'st!

Enter Albina.

Alb. Ah, Madam—ah, my Lord—fly to th' Emperor;
 Run and save *Cesar* from his own Despair.
 He is for ever separated from *Junia*.

Ag. Say'st thou, has *Junia* her own Life destroy'd?

Alb. To sting the Emp'r or with eternal Anguish,
Junia, to Him is (without dying) dead.

You know how hastily she shot from hence,
 Her Steps seem'd tending to *Octavia's* Chamber.
 But soon she took a different Way. I follow'd;
 Desperate she flies from forth the Palace Gates.
 Strait she perceives the Statue of *Augustus*.
 There, bathing with her Tears his marbled Feet
 Which in her straining Arms she clasp'd: O Prince,
Protect, said she, the Remnant of thy Blood!
 Rome, in thy Palace now beholds assassin'd
 Him, who of all thy Race came nearest Thee.

In vain they strive to make me perjur'd to him:

I to preserve my Faith do here, O Prince,

Devote my self to those Immortal Powers,

Whose Altars (for thy Virtue) thou dost share.

Mean time the People, at the Sight amaz'd,

Run from all Parts in Crowds, surround the Princess,

Are soften'd with her Tears, lament her Fate,

And with one common Voice espouse her Cause.

They lead her to the Temple, where so long

Our dedicated Virgins have preserv'd

The precious Pledge of ever-burning Fire.

Cesar beholds their March, but fears to stop 'em.

Narcissus bolder, breaking thro' the Press,

Begins to lay his impious Hands on *Junia*.

His Rashness with a thousand Wounds is punisht.

His

His Brains dash'd out, besprinkle *Junia's* Habit.
Cesar at this intimidated leaves her
 Amid the guarding Vulgar; and returns.
 All fly his Savage Silence. *Junia's* Name
 Is all he speaks: He stalks about at random;
 Nor dare he lift his haggard Eyes to Heav'n.
 'Tis fear'd, when Night and Solitude combine,
 His Grief may cause him to attempt his Life.
 Time presses: Fly. There wants but a Caprice,
 And he Destroys himself.

Agr. He'd do but Justice.

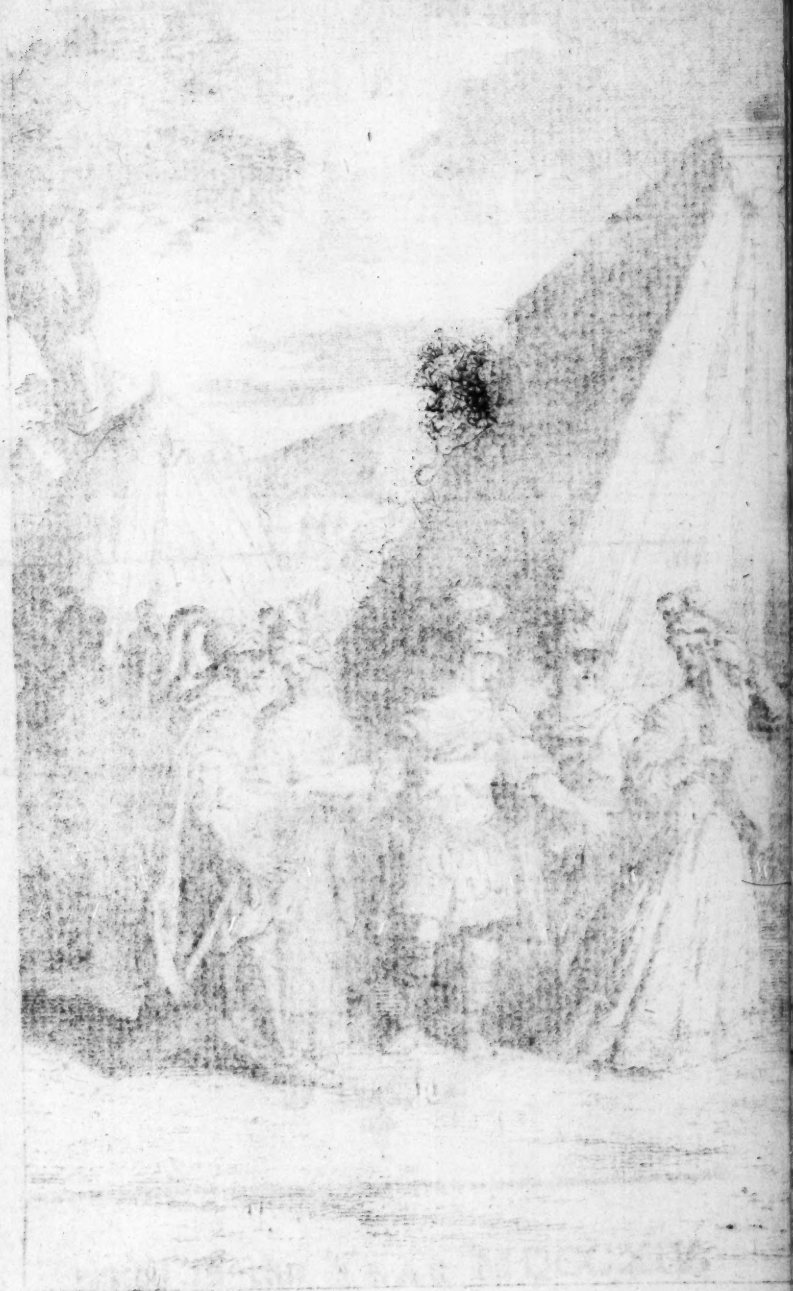
But let's go see how far his Transports push him.
 Compunction may perhaps produce some Change,

Bur. Pray Heav'n this prove the last of *Nero's* Crimes!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]



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ALEXANDER

THE

GREAT.

A

TRAGEDY.

Now first Translated from the
French of M. RACINE.

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Printed in the YEAR MDCCXIV.

MY EXAMINATION

THE

GREEN A. T.

T. R. A. G. D. Y.

Now and then for the

Hand of M. R. A. C. I. N. E.



Printed in the Year MDCCXIV.

P R E F A C E.



HERE is hardly any Tragedy wherein History is more faithfully followed than this: The Subject is taken from several Authors, but especially from the Eighth Book of Quintus Curtius. There, we read all that Alexander did when he enter'd into the Indies, the Embassies he sent to the Kings of that Country, the different Receptions his Envoys met with, the Alliance Taxiles made with him, the Haughtiness wherewith Porus refused the Conditions he was offer'd, the Enmity between Porus and Taxiles, and lastly, the Victory Alexander gain'd over Porus, the noble Answer which that brave Indian made the Conqueror, when he ask'd him how he expected to be treated, and the Generosity with which Alexander restor'd him all his Dominions, with the Addition of several others.

This Action of Alexander has been look'd upon as one of the gallantest of that Prince's whole Life; and the Danger he was in from Porus's Obstinacy, seems to be the greatest he ever met with. He himself acknowledged it, saying he had at last met with a Danger worthy his Courage. And it was upon this very Occasion he cry'd out: " O Athenians, how much Pains do I take to gain your Applause! I have endeavour'd to represent in Porus an Enemy fit for Alexander; and I may boast that his Character has pleas'd extreamly upon our Stage; so much, that some People have reproach'd me with making that Prince greater than Alexander. But they don't consider that in the Battel and Victory, Alexander is in Fact greater than Porus, that there is not a Line in the Play but what's to the Praise of Alexander, and that the very Invectives of Porus and Axiane are so many Elogiums of that Conqueror's Valour. Porus indeed may be more Moving, because he is unfortunate. " For, as Sen ca says. such is our " Nature, that we admire nothing in the World so much as " a Man that knows how to bear Misfortune, unshaken. Ita affecti sumus, ut nihil æquè magnum apud nos admirationem occupet, quàm homo fortiter miser.

The

P R E F A C E.

The Loves of Alexander and Cleophile are not of my own Invention. Justin mentions them as well as Quintus Curtius. Those two Historians tell us, that a Queen in the Indies call'd Cleophile, gave up her self to Alexander with the City which he besieg'd her in, and that he re establish'd her in her Kingdom because of her Beauty. She had a Son by him, and call'd him Alexander. These are the Words of Justin: Regna Cleofidis Reginæ petit. Quæ cum se dedisset ei, Regnum ab Alexandro recepit, illecebris consecuta quod virtute non potuerat, Filiumque ab eo genitum Alexandrum nominavit, qui postea Regno Indorum potitus est.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

Alexander.
 Porus, } *Kings in the Indies.*
 Taxiles, }
 Hephestion.

W O M E N.

Axiane, *Queen of another Part of the Indies.*
 Cleophile, *Sister to Taxiles.*

Alexander's Train.

S C E N E *lyes on the Margin of the River Hydaspes, in the Camp of Taxiles.*

Alex



Alexander *the Great.*

A C T I.

Enter Taxiles and Cleophile.

C L E O P H I L E.



WILL you then fight against a King,
whose Pow'r
Seems to force Heav'n to undertake
his Cause;
One at whose Feet all *Asia's* Kings
fall prostrate,
One who drags Fortune at his Cha-
riot Wheels?

Shut not your Eyes to *Alexander's* Greatness:
See, round ye, Thrones laid level with the Dust,
Nations subdu'd, and Monarchs led in Irons,
And then prevent the Ills that caus'd their Ruin.

Tax. Wou'd ye that I, struck with so base a Fear,
Offer my Neck and meet the threat'ning Yoke?
Shall *India* say I forg'd the Chains that bind us?
Shall I quit *Perus*, and betray those Princes
Who for their Country's Freedom are assembled,
And who, not wav'ring in a Choice so noble,
Alike know how to live or die like Kings?
Behold ye one, so much as one, that tamely
Is blown to Earth at *Alexander's* Name?
Which of them all goes forth to beg for Slavery?

Far.

Far from being frighten'd at his Bug-bear Glory,
 Ev'n in the Lap of Victory they'll strike him.
 Wou'd ye then, on the brink of Battle, Sister,
 Have *Taxiles* make humble Suit for Peace?

Cleo. Nay, rather does not He address to You?
 'Tis Your sole Friendship *Alexander* courts;
 Just in the Act of launching his red Thunder,
 He strives in secret to preserve You from it.

Tax. Why spares he Me alone? Of all the Princes
 Whom the *Hydaspes* sends to stop his Progress,
 Has none but I deserv'd his shameful Pity?

Can he not offer Amity to *Porus*?
 He doubtless thinks Him a too gen'rous Soul
 To listen to so scandalous a Favour:
 He seeks a soft, a less resisting Spirit;
 So chuses Me an Object for his Mercy.

Cleo. Brother, you mis-interpret his Designs:
 He takes You for the bravest of his Foes,
 And by disarming You, makes sure account
 Of trampling down all other Opposition.
 His Choice imprints no Stains upon your Name;
 His Friendship falls not to the Lot of Cowards;
 Tho', fir'd with Glory, he wou'd rule the World,
 No Slave is to be seen among his Friends.
 Alas, if his Acquaintance is so blackning,
 Why spar'd you not your Sister from such Shame?
 You know the daily Services he pays me,
 Which, but for You, had never gone such Lengths.
 You see me here the Mistress of his Soul,
 Nor want I hourly Tokens of his Flame;
 His burning Sighs have found a way ev'n hither,
 Thro' all th' Impediments of adverse Camps.
 Instead of being angry that I see him,
 I've heard you chide me for my Coldness to him:
 You caus'd me, Brother, to admit his Love,
 And, in my turn, perhaps to love Him too.

Tax. You, without blushing for your Beauty's Pow'r,
 May force that mighty Warrior to submit;
 Nor has your Heart just Cause to be alarm'd,
 If *Asia's* Conqu'ror triumphs over It.
 But a whole Nation is bound up in Me,

And

And must receive their Fate, as I shall steer;
And tho' your Counsels try to warp my Soul,
I, to preserve *their* Freedom, must be Free.
I know th' Inquietude which this must give you:
But as You, Sister, love; so I too love.

Axiane's bright Eyes, those Foes to Peace,
Arm all their Shafts against your *Alexander*.
Queen of each Heart, she leaves no Means untry'd,
To save that Liberty her Charms destroy;
Fill'd with Resentment at these foreign Chains,
She can endure no Tyrants but her Eyes.
Sister, she must be serv'd: Her glorious Anger —

Cleo. Will you destroy your self to pleasure Her?
Do. follow that dear Tyrant's fatal Dictates;
Serve her, or rather serve your Rival, Brother.
Adorn his Brow with Laurels due to You;

Axiane ordains it; fight for *Porus*:
And, adding to her Pride by your Exploits,
Secure the Empire of her Heart to Him.

Tax. But, Sister, think ye *Porus* —

Cleo. — Your self I ask,
Doubt ye *Axiane* does really love him?
What! see ye not, with how much warmth of Speech
Ev'n in Your Presence, she displays his Valour;
With her, how brave soever Others are,
'Tis only by His Side that Vict'ry flies;
Your Projects but for him wou'd prove abortive;
In him the Liberty of *India* rests;
Our Walls without Him had already tumbled;
His single Look can conquer *Alexander*.
She makes a God of that admired Prince;
And doubt ye that she'll make a Lover of him?

Tax. Cruel *Cleophile*, I fain wou'd doubt it.
Prithee confirm thy Brother in his Error:
Why paint ye to his Eyes that hated Object?
Rather assist him to belye his Sight.
Tell him *Axiane's* a haughty Beauty;
The same to all the World as to your Brother.
Sooth with some Hope —

Cleo. Hope on then, I consent;
But from your ineffectual Cares hope nothing.

Why

Why will you in Resistance seek a Conquest;
 Which *Alexander's* self prepares to yield ye?
 'Tis not with Him you must dispute the Prize;
Porus is He that means to rob you of it.
 Unequal Fame exhausts her Breath for *Porus*:
 She blows no Trumpet but for Him alone,
 As if the other Leaders had no Name,
 But follow'd to the Battle like his Subjects:
 Alas! if that vile abject Style delight ye,
 The *Greeks* and *Persians* point ye out a Master.
 A hundred Kings, Companions of your Thralldom
 You'll find; And *Porus* too to close the Train.
 But *Alexander* meditates Your Freedom,
 He leaves upon your Brow those Sovereign Marks
 Which by your haughty Rival are refus'd.
 The one enslaves you, t'other makes you reign.
 Instead of being sacrific'd for *Porus*,
 You will — but see that mighty Rival comes.

Tax. Ah! Sister, how my troubled Heart misgives me,
 And tells me that my Rival is belov'd.

Cleo. Adieu: Time presses to declare your Choice:
Porus's Slave, or *Alexander's* Friend. [Exit *Cleo.*

Enter *Porus*.

Por. My Lord, or I'm deceiv'd, or our proud Foes
 Will fall far short of their high Aims: Our Chiefs
 And Soldiers, burning with Impatience, wear
 A masculine Assurance on their Brow;
 They urge each other, and our youngest Warriors
 Make sure account of plenteous Crops of Laurels.
 I saw from Rank to Rank this Ardor spread,
 And rend with gen'rous Shouts the yielding Air:
 They murmur that instead of glorious Action
 The sloth of an Incampment wastes their Vigour.
 And shall we let such daring Spirits languish?
 Our Enemy begins to practise Art,
 He finds himself grown weak, and therefore tries
 To turn the threatening Storm: *Hephestion's* sent
 With vain Discourse to amuse us——

Tax. We must hear him,
 My Lord: We know not *Alexander's* drift.
 Perhaps 'tis Peace he's willing to present us.

Por.

Por. Peace! wou'dst thou then accept it from His Hand?
 Shall we behold him in his wasteful Travel,
 Trouble the happy Calm our Realms enjoy'd,
 And entring our Domains with Sword in Hand,
 Discharge his Rage on Kings who never wrong'd him?
 Shall we behold him plundering Provinces,
 Swelling our Rivers with our Subjects Blood,
 And when Heav'n seems to give him up to Justice,
 Wait 'till the Tyrant deigns to give us Pardon?

Tax. Say not, my Lord, that Heav'n abandons him.
 With equal Care its Favour still surrounds him:
 A King who makes so many Nations tremble,
 Is not a Foe to be despis'd by Kings.

Por. Far from despising, I admire his Courage,
 And render lawful Homage to his Valour.
 But in my turn am willing to deserve
 The Tribute which I'm forc'd to pay his Virtues.
 Do, raise this *Alexander* to the Sky;
 But if I can, my Lord, I'll pull him thence;
 Yes, I'll attack him on the very Altars
 Erected to him by the trembling World.
 Thus *Alexander's* self esteem'd those Princes
 Whose Realms he conquer'd; had he tim'rous seem'd,
Darius, dying, ne'er had own'd a Master.

Tax. Had that o'erweening Prince but known Himself,
 He still had reign'd where now another reigns.
 Besides, that Pride which caus'd his Overthrow,
 Had Grounds to plead which your Contempt has not.
 Then, *Alexander's* Valour scarce was known:
 The brooding Thunder had not burst its Cloud.
 In a dead Calm *Darius* dozing lay,
 But soon he wak'd, and with Amazement saw,
 Like a vain Dream, his mighty Pow'r forsake him.
 Thrown to the Earth by a victorious Arm,
 The darted Bolts, in falling, op'd his Eyes.

Por. But at what Price does *Alexander*, think ye,
 Offer this Peace, this base, ensnaring Peace?
 A hundred different Nations can inform ye,
 (Thrown into Chains by that fallacious Peace.)
 Let us not cheat our selves with flattering Hopes;
 His Friendship still brings Slavery in its Reat.

In vain you think t'obey him but by Halves;
You must resolve to be his Slave or Foe.

Tax. Without being either Cowards or Fool-hardy,
We may with some vain Homage sooth his Pride;
His hot Ambition soon will call him from us:
'Tis but a Torrent that will soon pass off
If let alone, but if resisted swells
And bears away the Ship-wreckt Mounds that stop it.
Then let us not encounter with his Anger,
But to his Passage give a smooth Reception,
And, yielding up what we shall soon regain,
Render him Duties that will cost us nothing.

Por. Nothing, my Lord! dare ye to think it Nothing?
Shall I the Loss of Glory count as Nothing?
Yours and My Kingdom wou'd be dearly purchas'd,
If they cost *Porus* the most trivial Meanness.
But do ye think a Prince so flusht with Fortune
Will leave no Traces of his Passage Here?
How many Kings, split on this fatal Rock,
Hold a dependent Tenure from his Will?
Our Crowns, the moment they became his Conquest,
Wou'd fit precarious on our Heads: Our Scepters
At his least Frown wou'd drop from out our Hands.
No longer tell me that his Course is transient;
He never yet left any Prince his Freedom,
And still to chain the Nations faster to him,
He often seeks 'em Kings amid the Dust.
But little am I toucht with these vile Cares:
Your Interest alone inspires this Language;
Porus is unconcern'd in this whole Talk;
When Glory speaks, he's deaf to all things else.

Tax. My Lord, like you, to Honour's Call I listen;
But Honour dictates to preserve my Kingdom.

Por. If you wou'd save your Honour and your Kingdom,
Prevent the Foe, and march with Me against him.

Tax. Contempt and Rashness are unfaithful Guides.

Por. Shame treads upon the Heels of tim'rous Souls.

Tax. Subjects love Kings that know to spare their Blood.

Por. They more esteem those who know how to reign.

Tax. None but proud Spirits will approve such Counsels.

Por. Kings will approve them: So perhaps will Queens.

Tax.

Tax. The Queen, you think, has Eyes for none but You.

Por. This I well know, a Slave is her Abhorrence.

Tax. Your Haughtiness, my Lord, accords with hers.

Por. Glory I love: And Glory's what she's fond of.

Tax. You've won her Heart.

Por. At least I will prevent

A Foreign Hand from bearing it away:

Tax. But do ye think a Lover ought t'expose
His Mistress and her People, with Himself?

No, no, no longer be deceiv'd, but own

'Tis not by Love you're guided, but by Hate.

Por. Well; since I must confess it, my just Anger
Desires a War as much as You do Peace.

I own, that, burning with a noble Heat,

I want t'encounter this same *Alexander*;

My Soul, uneasie at his high Atchievements,

Has long expected this most welcome Day.

Long e'er he sought me out, my Emulation

Had render'd me his Enemy in Secret.

I griev'd to see him taken up in *Asia*;

So strongly did my Wishes urge his Presence,

That I ev'n grudg'd the *Persians* that good Fortune:

And shou'd he now elude my ardent Longings;

Shou'd he to leave this Country seek a Passage,

You shou'd behold me, arm'd, arrest his March,

Refusing Him the Peace he offers You.

Tax. Doubtless, so high, so resolute a Spirit,

Merits in History a shining Place.

And shou'd ye fall beneath this great Design,

You'll bravely fall. The Queen draws near. Adieu.

Cry up your Zeal, and let her see your Pride,

The thing which you believe deserves her Love.

I shou'd disturb your noble Conversation:

Your Hearts wou'd scorn the Weaknesses of mine. [Exit.

Enter *Axiane*.

Ax. Does *Taxiles* avoid me? What's the Reason?

Por. He's in the right to hide from You his Shame:

And since he fears t'expose himself to Danger,

With what a Front can he sustain Your Looks?

But, Madam, let us quit so mean a Subject,

And since he's bent on Slav'ry, let him go,

And

And with his Sister worship *Alexander*.
 Let's leave a Camp in which, with Incense ready,
 The loyal *Taxiles* expects his Sovereign.

Ax. But, Sir, what says he?

Por. He too plainly speaks.

The Slave already boasts of his new Master,
 And fain wou'd have me serve him —

Ax. Be You patient,

And leave the Care of staying Him, to Me:
 His Sighs, tho' unencourag'd on my part,
 Declare that I'm the Object of his Love.
 Be that or so or not, I'll talk with him;
 We must not by this harsh Disdain compel him
 To finish a Design he mayn't ha' form'd.

Por. Do ye then doubt it? Can you acquiesce
 Upon a faithless, abject, perjur'd Lover,
 Who, to his Tyrant, means to give ye up,
 In hopes to re-obtain ye from his Hand?
 Go to, assist him to betray Your self;
 From my fond Eyes your Person he may tear,
 But he can ne'er deprive me of the Glory
 Of Fighting in Your Cause, and Dying for Ye.

Ax. Think ye, my Lord, that after such Disloyalty
 My Hand shall be his broken Faith's Reward?
 Think ye that I can fix my Friendship There,
 Or yield to 't bestow'd upon a Traytor?
 Can ye, without a Blush, say this of Me?
 Was I e'er known t'esteem that Prince so much?
 Think ye, my Lord, were I to make a Choice
 'Twixt You and *Taxiles*, I long shou'd doubt?
 Do I not know his Soul unsteady, wavering;
 That Love retains him while Fear calls him on?
 Do I not know that his irresolute Heart,
 Wou'd, but for Me, soon gorge his Sister's Bait.
 This *Alexander* took that Princess Captive,
 And Now She to her Brother is return'd;
 But I soon found the Embassy she came on,
 To catch him in the Net her self was fal'n in.

Por. How can ye then with Patience bear her Presence?
 Why quit ye not so criminal a Converse?
 Why are ye so solicitous to spare

A Prince—

Ax. 'Tis for your sake that I would gain him.
 Shall I see You, charg'd with our Kingdom's weight,
 March out alone against so great a Conqueror?
 In *Taxiles* I'd get ye an Assistant:
 Why have ye not for Me the same Complacence?
 But with such vulgar Cares your Soul's untoucht:
 So ye fall Nobly, you desire no more.
 Unmov'd at what your Death may be the Cause of,
 You give Me up without or Aid or Refuge,
 To *Alexander's* Wrath, to *Taxiles' Love*;
 He soon would treat me as a haughty Victor,
 And, to reward your Death, demand my Heart.
 Well, go, my Lord: Content your Inclinations:
 Go to the Fight: Forget to guard your Life:
 Forget that Heav'n, propitious to your Wishes,
 Perhaps prepar'd your Love a gentler Fate:
 Perhaps *Axiane*, at length relenting,
 Design'd.—But, no, my Lord, run to your Army:
 I find I keep ye here against your Will. [Is going.]

Por. Ah, Madam, stay; and see how much I love:
 Order my Destiny, command my Soul:
 Glory, I own, has great Dominion o'er it;
 But what's impossible to such bright Charms!
 I shall not say with what intrepid Courage
 Your Men and Mine were going to the Battle,
 Nor how great Joy it would ha' been to *Porus*
 Alone to triumph in his Rival's Sight.
 No, I am silent: Speak: You are my Queen.
 I lay my Hate and Glory at your Feet.

Ax. Be not afraid: The Heart that thus obeys me,
 Is not depos'd in Hands that can betray it.
 No, I'm too jealous of his Fame, to stop
 A Heroe, who is posting on to Vict'ry.
 No, fly to meet the proud insulting Foe.
 But keep with your Allies, and sooth their Humours.
 Be it my Care to work on *Taxiles*.
 Shew in his Favour Sentiments more mild;
 And I'll go try t'ingage him on our Side.

Por. Well, Madam, Go: With Pleasure I consent.
 Since we must see *Hephestion*, let us see him.

D

But

But still in hopes of following close his Heels,
First I expect *Hephestion*, then the Battle.

A C T II.

Enter Cleophile and Hephestion.

Hep. YES, whilst your Kings deliberate in Council,
And ballance in their Breasts what Choice to make,
Permit me, Madam, to discourse at large
The secret Reasons which have brought me hither.
Entrusted with my Master's glorious Flame,
Let me unfold it to the Eyes that caus'd it,
And for that Heroe beg at Your fair Hands,
What he so freely offers to Your Kings,
Peace and Repose : This, Madam, is my Errand.
After so many Sighs, what must he wait for?
Your Brother has consented, why delay ye?
Must he for ever fear a harsh Refusal?
Say, Madam, must he lay beneath your Feet
The yet unconquer'd Remnant of the Globe?
Must he give Peace? Or must he War pursue?
Pronounce. My Master will leave nought untry'd
To make ye His by Merit or by Conquest.

Cleo May I believe a Prince, at Glory's Heighth,
Still keeps the Mem'ry of my weak Attractives?
That he who carries Terror in his Train
Can so debase himself to sigh for *me*?
Captives like him do soon knock off their Fetters;
Glory compels Their Souls to higher Aims;
And Love with Them, disturb'd and interrupted,
Is soon o'er-whelm'd beneath a load of Laurels.
Whilst yet that Heroe held me as his Pris'ner,
I might perhaps have slightly toucht his Heart:
But when he to *my* Liberty restor'd me,
'Tis just to think that he resum'd his own.

Hep. O had I seen him, burning with Impatience,
Count o'er the dismal Days of your long Absence,
You would ha' known, that hurry'd on by Love,
He sought for none but You in all his Battles:

'Tis for your sake th' affrighted Provinces
 Have felt th' Effects of his impetuous Course,
 Which broke thro' all that stopt his Passage t'ye!
 Your Standards wave in the same Field with ours;
 The Camp's so near, one View discovers both:
 Yet after all this Toil the tim'rous Conqueror
 Fears he is still far distant from your Heart.
 What boots it him to run from Clime to Clime,
 If still the Entrance to your Heart is shut?
 If still you frame new Doubts about his Love?
 If with a thousand Diffidences arm'd—

Cleo. Alas! such Doubtings are but weak Defences:
 We always doubt that most which most we wish.
 Yes, since that Heroe needs will know my Heart,
 With Joy I hear the Story of his Passion;
 I fear'd lest Time e'er now had stopt its Course.
 I'm pleas'd he loves, and may he ever love!
 Nay more: When he, resistless, forc'd our Frontier,
 And within *Omphis'* Walls made me his Pris'ner,
 My Heart, which saw him Master of the World,
 Consol'd it self in that *His* Chains I wore;
 Far from complaining at the Change of Fortune
 I took a sweet Acquaintance with my Fate,
 And, losing the Remembrance of my Freedom,
 I fear'd t'obtain it, even when I ask'd it.
 Judge whether I'm o'er-joy'd at his Return.
 But must I see him cover'd o'er with Blood?
 Comes he before us in a Hostile way?
 And does he seek me only to torment me?

Hep. No, Madam, by your pow'rful Charms subdu'd,
 He now suspends the Terror of his Arms.
 He offers, to th' unthinking Kings, a Peace,
 And stops the Hand that would e'er now ha' crusht 'em.
 He fears lest Victory should go too far,
 And reach a Blow on *Taxiles'* Head.
 His Courage, at your just Alarms concern'd,
 Would grieve to wet his Laurels with your Tears.
 Assist then, Madam, his Pursuits of Peace,
 Exempt him from so undesir'd a Conquest,
 Prevail on those whose Ruin he would spare,
 T'accept a Good they owe to nought but Love.

Cleo. Doubt not of that, my Lord : My troubled Soul
Is agitated with incessant Fears:

I tremble for my Brother, dread his Fate,
Fear lest his Blood should stain so dear a Foe:

But I in vain oppose his boiling Passion;

Axiane and *Porus* fill his Soul;

A Queen's Attractions, and a King's Example,

When I begin to speak, rise up against me.

What have I not to dread in such a Plunge!

I fear for Him; and ev'n for *Alexander*:

I know a hundred Kings who sought to oppose him

Have split upon that Rock, and been undone:

I know his Deeds: But I know *Porus* too.

Our Nations, who have under his Command,

Repuls'd the *Scythians* and the *Persian* Force,

Made proud with Laurels which to him they owe,

Like him will Conquer, or will fall reveng'd.

I fear——

Hep. Shake off so vain an Apprehension:

Leave *Porus* to the Destiny that waits him:

Let *India* in his Cause arm all her Nations,

So *Taxiles* but turn his Steps from Ruin.

But here they come.

Cleo. My Lord, compleat your Work;

By your sage Counsels dissipate this Storm:

Or if it must break out, at least remember,

To make it fall on other Heads than ours.

[Exit Cleo.]

Enter Porus and Taxiles.

Hep. Before the Battle, which approaches, puts

Your Kingdoms in the Number of our Conquests;

My Master graciously is pleas'd to hold

His conqu'ring Hand, and once more offer Peace.

Your People, with fallacious Hopes abus'd,

Thought to ha' stop'd the Conqueror of *Euphrates*;

But spite of all your crowding Troops, th' *Hydaspes*

At length, beholds our Standards on its Banks:

E'er now they had been planted in your Trenches,

And your wide Plains heap'd up with Piles of Dead,

Had not that Heroe checkt his Soldiers Fury.

He comes not here to shed the Blood of Princes,

And fright their Subjects with a barb'rous Triumph:

He

He would not shine with such a mournful Splendor,
 Nor build his Greatness on the Tombs of Kings.
 But do not You, with vain Presumption spurr'd,
 Rouze his Resentment, and provoke the Storm.
 Now whilst his hovering Arm still hangs in Air,
 Content your selves with standing out thus long.
 Do not delay to render him that Homage
 Which in your Hearts, spite of your selves, you give him.
 Accepting the Support his Arm presents ye,
 Be proud of such a Friend, and such a Patron.
 This, *Alexander's* pleas'd to let you know;
 Ready to quit or to resume the Sword.
 You've heard his Purpose. Now declare your Choice:
 Or to lose All, or under him to hold it.

Tax: My Lord, believe not that a barb'rous Hatred
 Hoodwiaks our Eyes to Virtue so transcendent,
 And that our People, rooted in their Pride,
 Pretend in your Despight to be your Foes.
 We render what is due to shining Merit:
 You worship Gods who owe to Us their Temples.
 Heroes who pass'd for Mortals among You.
 Have met with Altars when they came to Us.
 But never will so brave a People turn,
 From being Adorers, to be abject Slaves:
 Believe me, be they ne'er so struck with Fame,
 They'll not give Incense that is sought by Force.
 Kingdoms enow, the Purchase of your Swords,
 Have seen their Monarchs bow beneath your Yoke.
 After so many States by You reduc'd,
 Is it not time, my Lord, You searcht for Friends?
 The Captive Crowds whom *Alexander* awes,
 Do ill support a Pow'r but just begun.
 They only watch a time to gain their Freedom;
 Your Empire's full of nought but cover'd Foes.
 In Secret they bemoan their Crown-less Kings.
 Your Chains, too far stretcht out, relax themselves.
 The *Scythians*, in their Hearts already mutinous,
 Attempt to break the gyves you mean for Us.
 Go to: Accept our Friendship's Pledge, and try
 Th' Effects of Faith by no set Oath engag'd.
 One Nation leave at least, that may, unforc'd,

Applaud the Greatness of your noble Deeds.
 I on these Terms embrace your Master's Friendship:
 I wait his Coming, as a King should wait
 A Heroe, who in Honour's Traces treads,
 And who may Rule my Heart, but not my Kingdom.

Por. When the *Hydaspes*, calling all its Bord'ers,
 Sent forth its Princes to defend its Banks,
 I thought that in this glorious Undertaking,
 None were engag'd but Enemies to Tyrants.
 But since a King crouching to him that braves us,
 Sollicites to be one of his Allies,
 'Tis I must satisfy my Country's Wishes,
 And speak for those whom *Taxiles* betrays.

What wants the King your Master in these Regions?
 And what's the mighty Aid he's pleas'd to grant us?
 What means he by presuming to protect
 Nations, who have no Enemy but Him?
 Before his Fury made Mankind uneasy,
India enjoy'd a pleasing calm Repose,
 Or if some Neighbour troubled its Serenity;
 It self supply'd sufficient good Defenders.
 Why are we invaded? by what barbarous Act
 Have we stirr'd up the Madnes of your Master?
 Were we e'er seen to threaten *his* Dominions?
 Or lay a Country waste we knew nought of?
 Could not so many Kingdoms, Desarts, Rivers,
 Be Barriers strong enough 'twixt Him and Us?
 An Inmate of the World's remotest End
 Might, one would think, be free from this Disturber:
 Unheard-of Ardor, which, in love with Mischief,
 No sooner's lit, but burns up all around:
 Whose only Rule or Reason is its Pride,
 Which would to one great Prison turn the World,
 And, tyrannizing o'er the spacious Globe,
 Covets as many Slaves as there are Men.
 Kingdoms nor Kings no longer must subsist:
 Under one Yoke he ranges all Mankind.
 I know his rav'nous Pride devours Us too.
 We are the only Sovereigns that are left.
 Why said I, *We*? My self alone, the Man
 In whom remain the Footsteps of a King.

But

But 'tis a noble Subject for my Courage.
 I'm glad to see the human Race enslav'd,
 That, if they're freed *Porus's* Hand may free them,
 And all may say, *The mighty Alexander*
Had made the truckling Universe submit,
But at the utmost end of it he found

A King by whom the World regain'd its Freedom.

Hep. Your Project marks at least a valiant Mind.
 But it is Now too late t'oppose the Storm.
 If *Porus* is the tottering World's sole Prop,
 I pity It, and pity *Porus* too:

I stay ye not. Go, march against my Master.

I only wish that you had better known him,

And Fame had only in Compassion told ye

But half of his Exploits; You then shou'd see —

Por. What shou'd I see? Or what cou'd I be told,
 Wou'd set me so much lower than your Master?

O I forget: The *Persians* tamely beaten.

Where was the Glory to subdue a King

Already by Effeminacy conquer'd,

A Nation void of Vigour, almost lifeless,

Groaning beneath the Gold with which 'twas arm'd;

Instead of Fighting, falling down in Heaps,

And setting their dead Troops against your live ones:

The others, dazl'd at his least Performance,

Came on their Knees to supplicate for Laws,

Frighten'd with Tales of Oracles, they thought

A God cou'd never meet with Opposition.

But We, who look with other Eyes on Conquerors,

Know that the Gods are far from being Tyrants;

And whate'er Title Slaves may give their Idol,

The Son of *Jove* with Us is but a Man.

We go not to perfume his Way with Flow'rs:

He finds Us every where with Sword in Hand.

At every Step he sees his Conquests stay'd.

A single Rock here costs him more Fatigue,

More Lives, more Onsets, than the *Persian* Empire.

Hating the Ease which caus'd those Wretches Ruin,

The Gold which paves our Steps don't spoil our Souls.

Glory's the only Good has Charms for Us,

That the sole Object *Porus* keeps in sight,

'Tis That —

Hep. Rising] That too is what my Master seeks.
His Heart dildains to flye at lesser Game.

'Tis that which tore him from his own Dominions,
And to the Throne of *Cyrus* urg'd his Steps,
Urg'd him to break the strongest Empire's Columns,
To fight for Crowns, to win them, and bestow them.
And since your Contumacy dares deny him
The Glory of the Pardon he presents ye,
This Day, Your self, the Witness of his Vict'ry,
Shall see the warmth with which he fights for Glory:
Forthwith, with Sword in Hand, you'll see his March.

[*Exit Hep.*

Por. Go too: I'll wait him; nay, I'll seek him out.

Tax. Will you then, giving way to your Impatience—

Por. No, I intend not to disturb your Friendship.

Hephestion anger'd solely against *Porus*,

Will let his Master know of Your Submissions.

The Legions of *Axiane* are rang'd

Beneath my Banners, and expect the Battel;

I will maintain the Splendor of both Thrones:

And You, my Lord, shall sit the Judge o'th' Combat:

Unless, excited by a glorious Zeal,

You join with your new Friends.

Enter Axiane.

Ax. What's this I'm told!

[*To Tax.*

Our Enemies count You among their Friends:

And loudly boast a certain King's Respects——

Tax. We shou'd not presently believe an Enemy:

A little time will make 'em know me better.

Ax. My Lord, disprove then this injurious Rumour;

Confound the Insolence of those who spread it.

Like *Porus* go and force them to be silent:

And let 'em, by a just Resentment see

They have no Foe more mischievous than You.

Tax. Madam, I'll go and draw my Army out.

Be not so soon alarm'd at such Reports.

Porus, his Duty does; and I'll do mine.

[*Exit Tax.*

Ax. Coward! this Coldness is no Sign you'll do it:

You tread not like a King that runs to Vict'ry.

We can no longer doubt it: We're betray'd.

His

His Sister supersedes his Fame, his Country:
 He keeps his Hatred private to Himself
 Until the Fight begins; and then he'll shew it.
 O Gods!

Por. His Change deprives me of an Aid
 I always knew too well to build upon.
 I, unconcern'd, have seen his Fickleness:
 And did much more his faint Resistance fear:
 A Traytor, leaving Us to please his Sister,
 Less Weakens us than does a cold Defender.

Ax. But pray, my Lord, what is't you Undertake?
 Without consid'ring *Alexander's* Forces,
 You run, almost alone, to meet their Swords,
 And fight their num'rous Army, by your self.

Por. What! wou'd ye have me, like a tim'rous Traytor,
 Conspire to set a Master o'er ye, Madam?
 Shall *Porus* in his Camp be seiz'd, unactive,
 Or when the Trumpet calls to War, decline it?
 I know you wou'd not have me be so base:
 Glory, I know, burns stronger in your Bosom.
 'Twas You whose pow'rful Charms (I well remember)
 Excited all our Kings, pusht them to War:
 You with a noble Pride reserv'd your Hand
 For Him alone that conquer'd *Alexander*.

Conquer we must: I flie to't: Not to shun
 The Name of Captive, but to merit it.
 Inflam'd by your bright Eyes, my Soul's resolv'd
 Dead or Victorious to deserve your Chain.
 And since it wou'd be vain to pour forth Sighs
 To one who has no Sense of ought but Glory,
 I'll go, and by the Splendor, won by Conquest,
 Fix Glory so inseparable from my Person
 That I perhaps at length may lead your Heart
 From Glory's Love, to love the Conqueror.

Ax. Well, my Lord, go then. *Taxiles* perhaps
 Has Subjects in his Camp more brave than He.
 I'll make a last Effort to stir 'em up.
 Then to your Camp I'll go, and wait your Fate.
 Inquire not further how my Heart's inclin'd.
 Triumph and Live.

Por. Why, Madam, d'ye delay?
 Why may I not this Instant be inform'd,
 Whether my Sighs have made your Heart less hard?
 Wou'd ye. (for Fate, Divine *Axiane*,
 Perhaps condemns me ne'er to see ye more).
 Wou'd ye that an unhappy Prince expiring,
 Shou'd be still unacquainted with the Glory
 That was design'd him? Speak.

Ax. What shall I say?

Por. Ah! if you felt some little Weakness for me;
 Your Heart, which testifies so much Esteem,
 Might flatter me with some small Hopes of Love.
 Can ye with all these Sighs be yet unmov'd?
 Can ye —

Ax. Go: March against this *Alexander*.
 The Victory is Yours, if that fam'd Warrior
 Defends himself no better than my Heart.

[*Exe.*]

A C T III.

Enter Axiane and Cleophile.

Ax. **W**HAT! am I here to be debarr'd my Freedom?
 Must I not see my Army march to Battel?

Does *Taxiles* on Me begin his Treason,
 And make a Prison for me; of his Camp?
 Is this th' obsequious Passion he professes?
 Does my Adorer make himself my Master?
 Does his fond Love, grown weary of my Rigour,
 Enslave my Person, since he can't my Heart?

Cleo. Construe more favourably the just Alarms
 Of one who knows no Conqu'ror but your Beauty:
 Look with more Goodness, Madam, on the Zeal
 Which interests my Brother in your Safety.
 Whilst (all around us) two most potent Armies
 Both stung with equal Fury, vent their Fierceness,
 To what Part else could ye have steer'd your Course?
 What other Place could shield ye from the Tempest?
 Here a full Calm secures ye: All is peaceful. —

Ax.

Ax. And 'tis this Peacefulness that I detest.
What, when my Subjects fill the Plain with Deaths,
And bravely for their Queen with *Porus* fight;
When with their Blood their Loyalty they seal,
And Cries of dying Warriors pierce ev'n hither,
Must I be told of Peace? And must the Camp
Of *Taxiles* alone remain Serene?

Must I be flatter'd with an odious Calm,
And Spectacles of Joy regale my Eyes?

Cleo. But, cou'd ye, Madam, think my Brother's Love,
Cou'd bear to see expos'd so dear a Person?
He knows the Hazards——

Ax. Therefore to prevent 'em
That generous Lover makes a Pris'ner of me?
And whilst his Rival's fighting in my Cause,
His peaceful Valour guards my Person here?

Cleo. How happy's *Porus*! how uneasy 'ye
Is the the least Absence of that glorious Man!
Your Anxiousness for Him wou'd almost prompt ye
To find him out ev'n in the Field of Battel?

Ax. I wou'd do more. I'd seek him ev'n in Death,
Lose my Dominions, and, unmov'd, see *Alexander*
Give 'em *Cleophile*, to buy her Heart.

Cleo. If you seek *Porus*, why wou'd ye be gone?
He'll soon be brought, by *Alexander*, hither.
Permit us to be tender of your Welfare,
And keep ye safe against your Conqueror comes.

Ax. You triumph Madam, and your Heart already
Tow'rds *Alexander* flies, and names him Victor.
You shou'd not with your Love be too much blinded,
Perhaps your Pride breaks out before the time.
Too hastily believing what ye wish,
You push Affairs too far.——

Cleo. My Brother comes:
He'll quickly set us in right in our Dispute.

Ax. Ah my misgiving Heart! That Brow, serene,
Too plainly tells me *Porus* is defeated.

Enter Taxiles.

Tax. Madam, if *Porus* had with less Impatience
Receiv'd the Counsels of a cordial Friend,
He might have spar'd me the afflicting Task.

Of bearing you the News of his Misfortune.

Ax. Is *Porus* —

Tax 'Tis too sure. His thoughtless Valour
Has felt the Mischiefs I so plain foresaw.
Yet (for my Heart respects his Virtue much,
Nor cares to Triumph o'er a fallen Rival)
He bravely, Inch by Inch, gave up the Field,
And drencht in Blood the Glory of the Foe,
Nay Vict'ry's self on his high Deeds intent,
'Twixt Him and *Alexander* some time waver'd.
But in the End his Valour grew outrageous,
And he was hurry'd much too far by Passion.
I saw his Troops o'erthrown and disarray'd,
Your Soldiers in disorder, his dispers'd,
And he himself, forc'd with them in their flight,
Wish for the Succour he before refus'd.

Ax. Refus'd! How's this! does thy base Mind expect
To be intreated to defend thy Country?
Must ye be drag'd to fight against your Will,
And made by Force to save your own Dominions?
Since you want spurring, was not the Example
Of *Porus* strong enough to prick ye on?
Could not that Heroe's Danger, nor thy Mistress,
Nor a whole Nation threaten'd, warm thy Heart?
Thou serv'st the Master well thy Sister gives thee.
Go on; do with me as her Hare directs.
To all the Vanquish'd give the same ill Treatment.
Thy Mistress with thy Rival lay in Chains.
The Deed is done. Thy Crime and his Disaster
Have fix'd that Hero deeply in my Heart.
I love him, and will, e'er the Day declines,
At once declare my Hatred and my Love:
To Him, before thy Face, swear constant Friendship;
And before his, to Thee immortal Hatred.
Adieu. Thou know'st me: Love me if thou wilt.

Tax. Think not my Vows were ever unsincere;
You have no Cause to fear or Threats or Chains;
For *Alexander* knows what's due to Princes.
Suffer his Goodness to continue t' ye.
A Scepter *Porus* did too rashly venture.
My self, implicitly, wou'd fight the Hand

That

That impiously presum'd to wrest it from ye.

Ax. What! shall my Scepter be a Foe's Donation?
Upon my rightful Throne shall I be plac'd
By the same Tyrant that had pull'd me from it?

Tax. Monarchs, o'ercome by his victorious Arm,
Have given way to his kind healing Cares.
Behold the Wife and Mother of *Darius*,
One calls him Son, and one a Brother stiles him.

Ax. No, no: I know not how to sell my Friendship;
Careless a Tyrant, and in Pity reign.
Think'st thou I'm like a feeble *Persian* Dame?
Think'st thou that *Alexander's* Court shall e'er
Retain *Axiane*? Think'st thou that I

Will with my Conqu'ror trapes o'er all the World,
And boast throughout the Softness of his Chains?
If he gives Kingdoms, let him give thee ours.
Let him adorn thee with the Spoils of others.
Reign on: Nor I, nor *Porus* will be jealous:
And thou shalt be ev'n more a Slave than Us.

I hope that *Alexander*, fond of Glory,
And vex'd his Vict'ry by thy Crime was sully'd,
Will wash it in thy Blood. Traytors like thee
Are often punish't, tho' the Treason's lik'd.
Whatever Favours he may blind your Eyes with,
Think on the Recompence of Faithless *Bessus*. [Exit *Ax.*

Cleo. Brother, give way to this outrageous Transport.
With Time and *Alexander*, You'll prevail.
Her Rage, whatever outward Shew she makes,
Can ne'er withstand the Offer of a Kingdom.
Command her Fate, her Heart will soon be Yours.
But tell me, have your Eyes beheld the Conqu'ror?
What Treatment, Brother, does he seem to promise?
What said he?

Tax. Yes, I've seen your *Alexander*.
At first the youthful Lustre of his Features
Seem'd to bely the number of his Deeds.
Fill'd with his Name, I could not. I confess,
Make so much Glory with such Youth accord.
But the Heroic Firmness of his Brow,
The Fire of his Regards, his high Deportment
Shew *Alexander*. And indeed his Visage,

Bears the unerring Symptoms of his Greatness;
His stately Presence, seconding his Projects,
Does, like his Sword, in all Parts win him Subjects;
He was departing from the Field. Methought,
Effulgent Vict'ry lighten'd in his Eyes.

Yet seeing Me, he strait lay'd down his Fierceness,
And shew'd his Condescension in its turn.

I saw his Tenderness, thro' all his Transports.

Return, says he, *prepare my charming Princess*

Again to see a Conqueror, who comes

To lay his Heart and Conquest at her Feet.

He'll presently be here. I've nought to say:

I leave ye wholly Mistress of Your Fate,

And put into your Hands the Care of Mine!

Cleo. If I have any Influence o'er the Conqueror,
All Opposition shall fall down before ye.

Tax. I hear a treading. It is doubtless, He.

Enter Alexander, and Hephestion. Alexander's *Train*.

Alex. to Hep.] Hephestion, go, let Porus be found out:

Give him his Life, and let the Slaughter cease. [*Exit Hep.*

Alex. to Tax.] Is it then true that a misguided Princess
Prefers to You a hot unthinking King?

But fear not him, my Lord: His Kingdom's Yours.

Try at that Price to bend th' ungrateful Woman.

King of two States, and Arbiter of hers,

Go now and offer her three Diadems.

[*yours---*

Tax. Ah! 'tis too much my Lord; your crowding Fa-

Alex. You may at leisure thank me for my Cares.

Delay not, but where Love directs ye, go:

And Crown your Passion with so fair a Palm. [*Exit Tax.*

Alex. To Cle.] Madam, I promise to support his Love:
But may I for my own conceive no Hopes?

When I on Him so prodigally pour

The Fruits of Vict'ry, must my self have none?

Disposing Scepters, Madam, as you please,

Crowning my Friends with my own proper Lawrels,

Heaping on Them the Goods my Arm acquir'd,

Shew that I languish after other Conquests.

I promis'd You that my Victorious Sword

Shou'd bring me soon near your enchanting Person,

But, at the same time, Madam, I remember,

You

You promis'd Me some Place in your Affection.
 Behold me Here: For Love himself fought for me,
 And Victory has disengag'd my Word.
 All round ye yield: 'Tis time You did so too.
 You promis'd it, then will ye still hold out?
 And shall your Heart be the sole thing that 'scapes
 A Conqueror's Zeal, who seeks for nothing else?

Cleo. No, Sir, that Heart pretends not to continue
 The only thing invincible to *Alexander*.

I render what I owe to that bright Virtue
 Which holds enslav'd a hundred crouching Nations.

Taming the *Indians* is your least Performance.

You strike the boldest Courages with Fear:

And, when you please, your Goodness, in its turn,
 Inspires with Love the most obdurate Hearts.

But yet, my Lord, these Victories, that Lustre,
 Those Charms, do often fill my Soul with Dread.

I fear, least You, contented with your Conquest;

Will leave me, to be prey'd upon by Grief;

And un-affected by the Warmth you caus'd,

Will scorn a Victory that came so cheap.

But little Love is found in such a Heroe:

Glory ingrosses all Your Thoughts, my Lord:

Perhaps ev'n now that your great Heart is fighting,

The Glory of my Conquest's all your wish for.

Alex. How ill you know the Violence of my Love!

I know there was a time when Fame alone

Had all my Heart. Kings and their People then

Were all I thought fit Objects of Pursuit.

The *Asiatic* Beauties I surmounted,

With the same Ease as I their Kings subdu'd.

Arm'd with a proud Disdain against their Shafts;

I paid not the least Homage to their Charms.

Fond of Renown, and every where unconquer'd,

My Heart plac'd all its Happiness in Freedom.

But now alas! what different Effects

Have your bright Eyes, those lovely Tyrants, wrought!

The Title of the Conqueror of the World

Is now no longer what my Heart desires:

With pleasure it confesses its Defeat,

And all it Wishes is to make you know it.

Why

Why will ye still be doubtful of your Conquest?
 Why do ye still upbraid me with my Glory?
 As if the glorious Bonds in which you hold me,
 Could retain none but vulgar grov'ling Spirits.
 I'll go and soon evince, by new Atchievements,
 The Pow'r of Love o'er *Alexander's* Heart.
 Now that my Sword, beneath your Laws engag'd,
 Must celebrate at once Your Name and Mine,
 I'll go and render miserably famous
 Nations 'till now unknown to all the Earth;
 And Altars shall be rear'd to You, by People
 Whose Savage Hands refuse 'em to the Gods.

Cleo. Vict'ry, my Lord, I know you'll carry with ye:
 But Love will never follow you so far.
 So many Seas and intervening Kingdoms
 Will quickly blot my Mem'ry from your Heart.
 When the rough Ocean sees Ye Plow his Bosom,
 To make compleat the Conquest of the World;
 When you shall see Kings prostrate at your Feet,
 And the adoring Earth be hush before ye,
 Will ye then think that there's a Youthful Princess,
 Without Cessation pining for your Absence,
 Re-calling in her Mind the happy Moments
 When that Great Man assur'd her of his Love?

Alex. Believe ye then that, barb'rous to my self,
 I can desert so exquisite a Beauty?
 Rather, will You renounce the Throne of *Asia*,
 On which I meant to place ye?

Cleo. O, my Lord,
 You know I much depend upon my Brother.

Alex. If what I Sigh for is in his Dispose,
India's whole Empire to his Sway subjected,
 Shou'd soon sollicit, in my Cause, his Suffrage.

Cleo. My Friendship for him seeks not Aquisitions:
 Do but appease an irritated Queen,
 Let not a Rival rob him of his Hopes
 For having only dar'd You to the Combat.

Alex. *Porus* was certainly a gallant Rival;
 Never such Valour challeng'd my Esteem.
 I, where the War rag'd most, beheld him; joyn'd him:
 And I must own he try'd not to avoid me:

We hunted out each other. Such a Fellness
 Wou'd soon ha' giv'n a Period to our Quarrel,
 But that the Soldiers pouring in between
 Made us mispend our Blows upon the Croud.

Enter Hepheftion.

Alex. What! are they bringing in that hot-brain'd Prince?

Hep. He's fought throughout. But hitherto, my Lord,
 His Flight or Death conceal that Captive from us.
 But, a small Party of his Men surrounded
 As they were flying, by their Look seem bent
 To stand it out, and dearly sell their Lives.

Alex. Do not enrage the Vanquish'd, but disarm them.
 Madam, I'll go and bend this stubborn Princess,
 That *Taxiles* may aid me in My Suit:
 And since my Ease of Mind depends on His,
 I'll fix his Happiness to build my own. [*Exe.*]

A C T IV.

Enter Axiane alone.

W I L L nothing e'er be heard but Shouts of Conquest,
 Grating my Ears with *Alexander's* Glory?
 And may I not at least have leave to hold
 A private Conversation with my Grief?
 Pursu'd and haunted by the Man I hate,
 They mean to tye me to the Oar of Life,
 Spite of my self. But, *Porus*, don't believe
 Thy Steps shall be untrodden long by Me.
 Doubtless thy Heart could not survive our Ills:
 In vain so many Warriors arm to seek thee,
 Wert thou alive thy Actions would betray thee.
 Alas! in parting, thy redoubled Ardor
 Seem'd to foretel this Blow of adverse Fortune,
 When thy fond Eyes, speaking to mine thy Passion,
 Askt me what Rank thou heldst in my Esteem;
 When mindless of the War's Event, thy Soul
 Was fill'd with anxious Cares about thy Love.
 Ah! why did I with so much Art conceal
 A Secret, so destructive to thy Peace?

How

How oft o'ercome by thy prevailing Merit,
 Have I been ready to unlock my Tongue?
 How oft have Sighs broke from me in thy Presence?
 But still I would not think 'twas Love I felt:
 In Glory's Favour all my Sighs I constru'd,
 And thought 'twas that alone had touch'd my Heart.
 Forgive me, O thou greatest best of Kings,
 Now, now I find 'twas nought but Thee I lov'd.
 Glory I own had some Dominion o'er me,
 Oft have I told thee so: But why alas
 Did I not tell thee that 'twas thou alone,
 Made me her Slave: In seeing thy Exploits
 I learnt to know her, and, tho' full of Charms,
 In any other Man she less had charm'd.
 But to what purpose now are all these Sighs
 Which lose themselves in Air, and thou ne'er hearst!
 My Soul e'er this should have resign'd the Light,
 And in the Grave have sworn to thine that Friendship,
 Which thou so long hast waited for: E'er this
 I should, in witness of my Faith, have shewn
 I could not live a Moment after thee.
 Thinkst thou I'll live beneath the Laws of one
 Who by thy Death has gain'd the Mast'ry of us?
 I hear he now is coming to discourse me,
 And by restoring me my Scepter, means
 To give me Comfort: He perhaps believes,
 By that false Mildness to subdue my Hate.
 But he shall see me, after thy Example,
 Die like a Queen as Thou didst like a King.

Enter Alexander.

So then, my Lord, you take the Barb'rous Pleasure
 Of looking on the Tears your Arms have caus'd!
 Or do ye grudge me, in the State I'm in,
 The woeful Liberty of Grieving.

Alex. Madam,

Your Grief is no less free than it is just.
 You mourn a gallant Prince. I was his Foe,
 But not so far as to forbid the Tears
 Giv'n to his Death. I knew him well, by Fame,
 Before the *Indus* saw me on its Banks.

Amongst

Amongst the greatest Kings he shone distinguisht.
I knew——

Ax. Why therefore came ye to invade him?
By what dire Law, what curst Necessity,
Enforc'd, do You thus range from West to East
Purely to war on Virtue? cannot Merit
Shine out, but You must strait rise up against it?

Alex. 'Tis true, I fought out *Porus*: But, believe me,
'Twas not for his Destruction that I fought him.
Spurr'd by the Rumour of his warlike Deeds,
I long'd to see him: And the very Name
Of one till then unconquer'd rous'd my Soul
To new Exploits, and hither wing'd my Steps.
When all Men's Eyes (I thought) on Me were fixt
Strait did this Hero's recommended Valour
Give check to Fame, and make her Doubt between us:
The World thus ringing of Him, *India* seem'd
To open to my Arm a worthy Field:
Weary of conquering Kings without Resistance,
With Joy I heard the Noise his Valour made:
Encourag'd by so brave a Foe, I came
To seek the Glory of a well-fought Battle:
Nor has my Aim been frustrated: His Courage
I own, has far surpass'd my Expectation.
Vict'ry, which us'd to be my constant Follower,
Had almost quitted Me to side with You.
Porus disputed the least Laurel with me:
And I may say, that ev'n the Loss of Vict'ry
Has on my Eaemy fresh Glory heap'd,
That from so brave a Fall he higher rises,
And that his greatest Joy is, that he Fought.

Ax. He well might quit all Care of Life, when singly
He had to deal with such a Host: But, pray,
Since you such Praise bestow upon his Valour,
Why fought you not, my Lord, as Heroes should?
Why did you by Deceit attack his Virtue,
And use another's Hand to work his Fall?
Exult: But know that *Taxiles* in secret
Disputes the glorious Name of Conqueror with ye.
The Traytor, not unjustly, thinks you owe
The Victory to his Artifice alone.

And

And midst my Grief it pleases me to see
The Glory shar'd by such a Wretch as Him.

Alex. In vain your Grief does seek to slur my Glory.
I never yet was known to steal a Conquest,
Nor by mean Shifts, which I am guiltless of,
Deceive, instead of Vanquishing, an Enemy.
I never could, tho' every where out-number'd,
Disguise my Aims, or hide my self in Covert:
The Sun has always lighted up my Battles.
'Tis true, Compassion mov'd me for your Kingdoms,
I try'd your Princes Ruin to prevent,
And would have Sav'd them both, or Fought them both.
Believe —

Ax. I do believe that you're Invincible.
But is't enough that All is easie to ye?
Must ye, because ye Can, lay Kings in Chains,
And carry Devastation thro' the World?
What Crime had any of our Towns committed,
Or how incurr'd your Wrath those num'rous Dead
Which You have heap'd in Piles along th' *Hydaspes*?
What had I done to draw the Tempest hither,
To sink the only Man I could have lov'd?
Did he o'er-run the Frontiers of Your *Greece*?
Did We stir up Mankind against Your Glory?
Alas! without being jealous, we admir'd it.
Perus and I, charm'd with each other's Love,
Were entring on a State more blest than Yours.
Perus confin'd his Hopes to win a Heart
Which had perhaps this Day nam'd Him its Conqu'ror.
Had his been all the Blood You e'er had shed,
Were this the only Crime you could be tax'd with,
Would ye not think your self extreamly Wretched,
To come so far to break so fair a Tye?
Think what ye please, you're nothing but a Tyrant.

Alex. Madam, I see you'd have me grow enrag'd,
And in unworthy Terms break out against ye:
Hoping, perhaps, that my exhausted Mildness
Will give some Blemish to its former Glory.
But even tho' your Virtue had not charm'd me,
You now attack a Conqueror disarm'd.
My Soul, engag'd to pity you, unask'd,

Respects

Respects the sad Mis-hap in which you're plung'd.
 'Tis your disastrous Trouble blinds your Eyes,
 And shews me to ye as an odious Tyrant.
 You, but for It, would own that Blood and Tears
 Have not been always us'd to soil my Arms.

Ax. They must be blind, my Lord, who do not see
 Those Virtues which but sharpen My Despair.
 You have taught Victory her self, Sobriety,
 T'unlearn that Pride which renders her so Fatal;
 Tam'd by your Sword, the *Scythian* and the *Persian*
 Hug the soft Chain and sport beneath the Yoke,
 Tending your Welfare like your proper Subjects.
 But what am I the better, if, while *Others*
 Adore your Goodness, *Me* you Persecute?
 Think ye that my Aversion must abate,
 Because *They* kiss the Hand that gives *Me* Pain?
 Will all these Kings whom you've aveng'd or aided,
 Those num'rous Nations whom Your Sway makes easie,
 Restore to me my *Perus*? No, my Lord:
 The more that You by all the World are lov'd,
 The more that I my self am forc'd t'admire ye,
 So much the more I hate ye.

Alex. I excuse

The Transports of a Friendship so transcendent:
 Tho', Madam, they may very well surprize me.
 If common Fame has not abus'd my Ears,
Perus with no kind Look was ever favour'd.
 'Twixt *Taxiles* and Him your Heart still waver'd,
 And, while He liv'd, conceal'd its Thoughts in Silence,
 And now when He no longer hears your Voice,
 You give Decision in his Favour, Madam!
 Think ye that his cold Ashes ask your Love?
 Oppress not thus your Soul with useless Sorrows.
 Cares more important call ye off; your Tears,
 Have paid sufficient Honour to his Mem'ry.
 Reign, and support the Glory of a Queen,
 Calm your disorder'd Senses, and consult
 The Welfare of your State, shook by his Fall:
 Chuse It, among so many Kings, a Master.
Taxiles still assiduous—

Ax.

Ax. What, that Traytor?

Alex. Be not so harsh in your Opinion of him.
He ne'er was soil'd with Treach'ry towards You.
Master of his Dominions, he had Pow'r
Them and himself to save from Desolation.
Nor Oath nor Duty bound him to embrace
The Ruin *Porus* ran into the Jaws of.
In short, remember *Alexander's* self
Sollicites for a Prince that loves ye. Think
How the *Hydaspes* and the *Indies* join'd
Will rowl their peaceful Streams beneath your Laws.
Think what Accessions I may heap upon ye,
When once Your Int'rests are the same with his.
He comes. I will not check his Sighs, but leave him
T'unfold his ardent Wishes at your Feet.
My Presence is already too offensive.
The Lovers Converse calls for Privacy.

[Exit *Alex.*

Enter *Taxiles*.

Ax. Approach thou mighty Monarch of the *Indies*.
I have been rattl'd for my Anger tow'rds ye.
I'm told, that pleasing Me is all you aim at,
That all my Coynefs but confirms your Love.
Nay more, they'd have me Love ye in my turn;
But know'st thou what a Task thou must perform :
Know'st thou the Means that must be us'd to win me?
Art thou prepar'd —

Tax. Ah! Madam, only try me,
Try what so sweet a Hope can urge me to.
What must I do?

Ax. He that does truly love me,
Must be in love with Glory as I am.
He must declare his Love by glorious Deeds,
And bear to *Alexander* mortal Hatred.
He fearless must look Danger in the Face,
Must fight, must conquer, or in Battel fall.
Cast, cast thy Eyes on *Porus*, and Thy self,
And judge which most deserv'd *Axiane*.
Yes, *Taxiles*, my Heart, in shew unfix'd,
Knew how to chuse betwixt a Slave and King.
I lov'd him, I adore him. And since Fate
Forbids him to enjoy so sweet a Sight,

'Tis

'Tis You shall be the Witness of his Glory:
My Tears, each Moment, shall revive his Mem'ry,
And thou shalt hear me talk of none but Him.

Tax. Then your Heart's frozen, and I burn in vain?
Can nothing, nothing wipe away his Image?

Ax. Thou may'st once more recover my Esteem:
In our Foe's Blood thou may'st wash off thy Crime.

Occasion smiles, and *Porus*, tho' intomb'd,
Is rallying now his Soldiers round his Standard.

His very Ghost seems to arrest their Flight;

Nay ev'n thy Troops, asham'd of thy Desertion,
Shew, by their Brow indignantly contracted,

That they repent the Crime you forc'd 'em to:

Go, second the Impatience that devours 'em.

Avenge our yet respiring Liberties.

Be thou my Throne's Defender and thy own.

Run, fly and be a second *Porus* to us.

You answer nothing. On thy Face I read

Thy dastard Spirit. I in vain point out

A Hero's Traces. Thou'rt resolv'd on Slav'ry.

Go, slave it on, and leave me to my self.

Tax. This is too much. You have perhaps forgot
That I can talk Commandingly, if urg'd.

I may grow weary of your scornful Treatment.

I am the Master of your State and Person,

And may —

Ax. I know it. I'm your Pris'nery, Sir:

Perhaps you think to captivate my Thoughts,

And make me trembling yield to your Desires.

Go to, throw off Disguise and be your self.

Call Terror to your Aid: Exert the Tyrant.

Do what thou wilt; my Hate can be no greater;

But prithee do not waste thy Breath in Threats.

Thy Sister comes t'instruct thee what to do.

If her Advice and my Desires prevail,

Thou'lt soon enable me to re-join *Porus*.

Tax. Ah! may I rather — [*Exit Ax.*]

Enter Cleophile.

Cleo. Leave that thankless Woman.

Sworn Troubler of our Peace: Forget her.

Tax.

Tax. No.

I love her, and tho' all my fervent Vows
Obtain nought else but everlasting Hatred;
Yet 'spite of her Disdain and your Perswasions,
Spite of my self, I must for ever love her.
But after all, her Anger's not surprizing.
On You and on My self the Blame must fall.
Had it not been for your pernicious Counsels,
She less had hated me, and I had kept her
Still in suspense 'twixt *Porus* and My self.
O with what Pleasure had it fill'd my Soul,
But for a Moment to have seen her waver!
No, I can't live beneath her Hatred's weight.
I must go sue for Mercy at her Feet.
I fly, resolv'd t'assist her Indignation,
Against Your self and *Alexander* too.
I know the mutual Fire which burns ye Both:
But still your Quiet must give way to Mine;
Perish the Universe, so I be easie.

Cleo. Go then and hasten to the bloody Field,
Let not your present Ardor cool: Why stay ye?
Away: the Battel rages, *Porus* waits ye.

Tax. How's this! does *Porus* once again appear?

Cleo. He does: By his fell Blows too surely known,
He manag'd well. The Rumour of his Death
Kept back a too believing Conqueror's Arm.
He comes to steal upon their sleeping Valour,
And disconcert a Victory ill-secur'd.
He doubtless comes like an enraged Lover
To bear away his Mistress, or to perish.
Your Troops, seduc'd by that ungrateful Woman,
Murmur, and seem prepar'd to follow *Porus*.
Go then your self: Go like a gen'rous Lover,
Assist your happy Rival's Cause. Adieu. [*Exit Cleo.*

Tax. alone.] Does Fortune, obstinately bent against me,
Revive an armed Rival to destroy me?
Shall He revisit her who mourn'd his Death,
And who ev'n then esteem'd Him more than Me?
Ah! 'tis too much. I'll try what Lot awaits me,
And who's to carry off this noble Conquest.

Come

Come on: Nor let us idly wrathful, stay
For others to decide th' important Quarrel. [Exeunt.]

A C T V.

Enter Alexander and Cleophile.

Alex. **W**HAT! fear'd ye *Porus* after his Defeat?
And did ye think my Conquest not accomplish'd?
No, 'twas impossible he shou'd escape me:
My Soldiers had each Avenue beset.
Now he's an Object not of Fear but Pity.

Cleo. 'Tis Now that *Porus* most is to be fear'd.
However brave he was, his bruted Valour
Disquieted me less than his Misfortune.
While at a pow'rful Army's Head he stood;
His Forces, his Exploits alarm'd me not:
But he's a subjugated hapless King.
And therefore Now I rank him 'mong your Friends.

Alex. That is a Rank which *Porus* cannot challenge.
Too studiously he labour'd for my Hatred.
He knows I long withstood the Provocation:
But now I hate him to his Heart's desire.
I owe too an Example to the World.
I ought on Him to take a full Revenge
For all those Mischiefs he had Pow'r t'avert.
I'll punish him for forcing me to do't.
'Twice vanquish'd, hated by my charming Princess—

Cleo. My Lord, I hate not *Porus*, I confess,
And if 'twere lawful for me now to hear
The Voice of his Misfortunes pleading for him,
I'd tell ye, that of all our Princes, He
Was far the Greatest: that our Provinces
Have by his single Arm been long defended:
That he, in marching against You was proud
Of furnishing fit Matter for your Sword;
Assur'd if once in Battel he cou'd meet ye,
His Name wou'd follow yours throughout the World.
But if I Him defend, my gen'rous Cares
Injure my Brother, and destroy his Wishes.

If *Porus* live, where then is *Taxiles*?

His Ruin's certain, and mine too perhaps.

Yes, if his Love does unsuccessful prove,

Cleophila must bear the Blame and Punishment.

When betwixt Him and You I see the *Ganges*

(As You're upon the Wing to gain fresh Conquests.)

Who then, my Lord, shall curb his lawless Rage?

Of its sole Joy bereft, my sick'ning Heart

Will, lonely, mourn and pine away with Grief:

Or shou'd he force it to another Object,

Where will the Conqueror be to whom I gave it?

Alex. This is too much: and if your Heart is mine,

I shall, in spite of Him, know how to keep it

Better than all those Realms my Sword has conquer'd,

Those Realms which I but kept for your Acceptance.

One Vict'ry more, then, Madam, I return

To be by You commanded, and to bound

My Glory in the Circle of Your Arms.

The *Mallian* waits to render me his Homage.

Now I'm so near the Ocean, what remains

But that I shew me to that boistrous Element,

As Conqueror of the World, and Your Adorer?

Then —

Cleo. But, my Lord, why always War on War?

Do ye, beyond the Earth, look out for Subjects?

And wou'd ye have for Witness of your Actions,

Countries, unknown ev'n to their Inhabitants,

In such rude Climes what can ye hope to fight?

They'll set against ye vast untrodden Wastes,

Desarts which Heav'n refuses to enlighten,

Where Nature seems her self to lye expiring.

Nay, envious Chance, who has not yet been able

To stop the Course of such a glorious Life,

May wait your coming there, and means to bury,

If not your Name, your Tomb in dark Oblivion.

Think you to drag along a shatter'd Army,

So oft recruited and so oft consum'd?

Your Soldiers, whose bare Aspect moves Compassion,

Have left in sundry Places half themselves.

Their Groans and Cries sufficiently inform —

Alex.

Alex. Madam, They'll march, if I but once appear.
Those Hearts which, with a Camp's vain leisure spoil'd,
Run o'er their Wounds and murmur as they tell 'em,
To follow Me fresh Spirits will assume,
Covet new Wounds, and blame their former Murmurs.
But first we'll *Taxiles's* Love support.
His Rival can no more his Wishes cross:
Madam, I've said it once, and do again.

Cleo. My Lord, the Queen —

Eneer Axiane.

Alex. Well, Madam, *Porus* lives.

Heav'n seems t'have heard your Pray'rs, and gives him t'ye!

Ax. Alas! for ever It deprives me of him.

No glimpse of Hope remains to ease my Pain:

His Death before was Doubtful, now 'tis Certain.

He flings himself upon it, and perhaps

'Tis solely for my sake, to bring me Aid.

But what's his single Person to an Army?

In vain his Efforts did at first alarm 'em:

In vain some Warriors, by his Courage hearten'd,

Again spread Terror in the Victor's Camp:

He must, o'er-power'd, sink at length, expiring

Upon those Piles of Dead that stop his Passage.

O could I have the Liberty to shew him

Axiane, and die before his Face!

But *Taxiles* restrains me: yet the Traytor

Is gone to feed upon that Hero's Blood,

Is gone to look on him in Death's cold Arms,

If yet he has the Courage to approach him.

Alex. No, Madam, by my Care his Life is sav'd;

Soon his Return will satisfy your Wish.

You'll see him:

Ax. Do your Cares extend to Him?

And does the Arm that sunk him raise him up?

Could I from *Alexander* hope his Safety?

Indeed what may we not from Him expect?

But I, my Lord, remember well you told me

That *Alexander*, Conqueror, had no Foes,

And that the Moment he a Vict'ry gain'd

His Enmity was over. Gallant Mind!

Neither was *Porus* *Alexander's* Enemy:

Glory did equally inflame ye both:
 He long'd t' encounter so renown'd a Warrior,
 And *You* attackt him only to preserve him.

Alex. His fixt Contempt which sets me at Defiance,
 Doubtless deserves a Conqueror, more severe.
 His Pride in Falling seems to be confirm'd.
 But I'm resolv'd to cease to be his Foe,
 And will proceed as *Taxiles* shall arbitrate:
 He only can or save him or destroy him,
 And him alone it is that *You* must gain.

Ax. I bend my Knee to Him? for an Asylum
 Am I turn'd o'er to *Taxiles's* Mercy?
 Must *Porus* seek for such a base Support?
 Alas, my Lord, I find you've vow'd his Death,
 You only sought him out for his Destruction:
 How soon a generous Soul may be seduc'd!
 My easie Heart, forgetting all its Anger,
 Admir'd Perfections You're a Stranger to.
 Go to, my Lord, be Cruel as you're Valiant,
 Sully with Blood a Course begun so nobly.
 After so many Foes have felt your Favours,
 Destroy the only one you shou'd ha' sav'd:

Alex. He comes.

Enter Porus, Hephestion and Alexander's Guards.

Alex. Well, *Porus*, see what Pride produces!
 Where's fled the Hope that lur'd ye to your Ruin?
 Your haughty Spirit is at length reduc'd.
 I owe one Victim to my slighted Glory.
 Yet I with willing Hands hold forth to *Porus*,
 What he so often has refus'd, a Pardon.

Axiane. rebellious to my Goodness,
 Will, tho' it cost your Life, be constant to ye;
 Wou'd have ye die without one wavering Thought,
 Meerly that *You* may carry to the Grave
 The Appellation of her faithful Lover.

Pay not so dear for such an useless Glory.
 Resign your Love to *Taxiles*, and live.

Por. To *Taxiles*?

Alex. To Him.

Por. You do but well.

What he has done for *You* deserves no less:

'Twas

'Twas He depriv'd me of my hop'd-for Conquest,
Gave ye his Sister, sold his Reputation,
Deserted *Porus*. Can you ever hope
To recompense the least of all these Favours?
But I have cas'd ye of so great a Debt,
Go see him now expiring on the Field —

Alex. What! *Taxiles*?

Cleo. O Heav'ns!

Hep. My Lord, he's dead.

He flung himself upon his own Destruction.

Porus was vanquish'd. But instead of yielding

He seem'd t' Attack, not stand on the Defensive.

His Soldiers dead and dying at his Feet

Made him a Bulwark with their slaughter'd Bodies.

There as within a Fortress firm he stood

The brunt of a whole Army, and forbid

Th' Approach ev'n of our most intrepid Warriors.

But yet I spar'd him. His exhausted Vigor

Would soon ha' put his Life into my Pow'r,

When *Taxiles* approacht the bloody Spot:

Keep off cries he *this Captive is my due:*

Porus *there is no help thy Ruin's certain;*

Thou must or perish or renounce the Queens.

These Words reviv'd the deaden'd Rage of *Porus*,

Who lifting up his weary'd Arm, and searching

His Rival with an Eye sedately Haughty,

Hear I not *Taxiles's* Voice, said he,

That most accursed most perfidious Traytor,

Who has betray'd his Country Mistress, Me?

Coward come on, Axiane is thine.

I'm willing to resign that glorious Conquest.

But then my Head along with it must go.

Approach. With this the irritated Rivals

Flew at each other. We oppos'd their Rage,

But *Porus* thro' the Crowd his Passage opens,

Comes up to *Taxiles*, and strikes him dead,

And then contented yields himself to Us.

Cleo. So none but I, my Lord, have cause to mourn.

Your Arms whole weight has fal'n on none but me.

Vainly my Brother courted your Protection;

Alas! He only finds your Glory fatal,

What

What does your Friendship boot him in the Grave?
But shall his Dearh. my Lord, go unreveng'd?
Shall he who kill'd him live to boast he did it?

Alex. Do my Lord hear *Cleophile's* Complaints.
I pity her. She justly mourns her Brother.
All she could do to save him prov'd in vain.
She made a Coward of him, yet he perisht.
Not that 'twas *Porus's* Fault: It was his own.
What Business call'd him where the Battle rag'd?
Meant he to rescue *Porus* from his Danger?
No, no, he went to insult a hapless King,
A King whom Victory her self respected.
But wherefore do I try to dispossess ye
Of a Pretence so fair, so colourable?
What more desire ye? *Taxiles* is dead.
Offer, my Lord, this Victim to his *Manes*,
This mighty Victim: Do, revenge your self.
But don't forget that I his Crime partake:
Yes; my Heart. *Porus*, does not love by halves:
This, *Alexander* knows: This, griev'd your Rival.
You only of your Happiness was ign'rant.
But I rejoice you live; from Me, to hear it.

Por. Ah! Madam, let on Me their Vengeance fall:
Imbitter not a Fate you've made so charming.
To be by You bewail'd, what greater Glory
Could Vict'ry's self have granted to my Wishes?

To *Alex*] 'Tis now full time, You sated your Revenge.
You see what I, tho' vanquisht, have perform'd.
Fear *Porus*. Fear again this unarm'd Hand;
Avenging, 'midst an Army, its defeat.
My Name may raise new Enemies, and waken
A hundred Kings now sleeping in their Chains.
First stifle in my Blood those Seeds of War,
Then safely quell the rest of human Race.

Think not a Heart like mine can own a Conqu'ror;
Or stoop to supplicate ought of Thee. Speak,
Let's see if thou know'st how to use a Vict'ry.

Alex. *Porus's* Pride's incapable of bending.
Ev'n to his utmost Gasp he gives me Threats.
Indeed my Vict'ry well may be alarm'd,
I ought to guard against such Men. Speak therefore;

How

How should I treat ye, think ye?

Por. Like a King.

Alex. Then like a King I am resolv'd to treat ye.

I will not leave my Victory unfinished.

Your self desir'd it, so you can't complain.

Porus, reign on : Your Kingdom I restore ye,

With it, accept my Friendship, and *Axiane*.

To those soft Fetters I condemn ye both.

Live both and reign, sole Monarchs of the *Indies*. [ye.]

To Cleo.] I own, this Treatment, Madam, may surprise

But this is always *Alexander's* Vengeance.

I love ye; and my Heart, when You complain,

Would by a thousand Deaths avenge your Grievs.

But you your self would be offended at it,

If I should put to death an unarm'd Enemy.

Porus would triumph then, and, braving *Alexander*,

Would like a Conqu'ror to his Tomb descend.

Permit me to compleat my Course and bring

A spotless Virtue to your beauteous Eyes.

Let *Porus*, crown'd by Me, in *India* reign :

And be the rest of the World's Circuit Yours.

Assume the Thoughts which such a Rank suggests.

Make, in its Infancy, your Reign admir'd,

And looking on the Splendor that surrounds ye,

Forget the Wrath of *Taxiles's* Sister.

Ax. Yes, Madam, Reign ; and give Me leave t'admire

The Greatness of the Heroe's Soul who loves ye.

Love, and Possess th' uncommon Satisfaction

Of seeing all the Earth adore Your Lover.

Por. My Lord, 'till now, the Universe, alarm'd,

Forc'd me t'admire the Fortune of your Arms.

But nothing forc'd me in that common Fright

To own in You, more Virtues than in Me.

But now I yield. Your Conquest is compleat.

Your Virtues, I confess, do match your Glory.

Go on, my Lord, to subjugate the World;

And I my self will second your Exploits.

I follow ye, by Duty call'd, t'endeavour

To give the World a Master so Heroick.

Cleo.

Chor. My Lord, I murmur not against your Virtue,
Both Life and Crown to *Porus* you restore;
I will believe your Glory prompts ye to't
But press not Me to answer. My griev'd Soul
Can only weep, in Silence, its Disaster.

Alex. Yes, Madam, we will mourn so true a Friend,
And, Sighing, shew in what Esteem we held him.
A noble Tomb shall tell to future Ages,
At once My Gratitude and Your Misfortune.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 15. last Line but 3 read, *Or, if he can, &c.* p. 42.
last Line but 7 read, *Tir'd*, and the next Line read, *You over-*
looks me as you never had known me: p. 44. last Line but one
read, *I did, &c.* last Line of all read, *Together, &c.*

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